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NATIONAL REVIEW

The March Is Over

Barack Obama's Post-Racist Campaign (And Its Discontents)

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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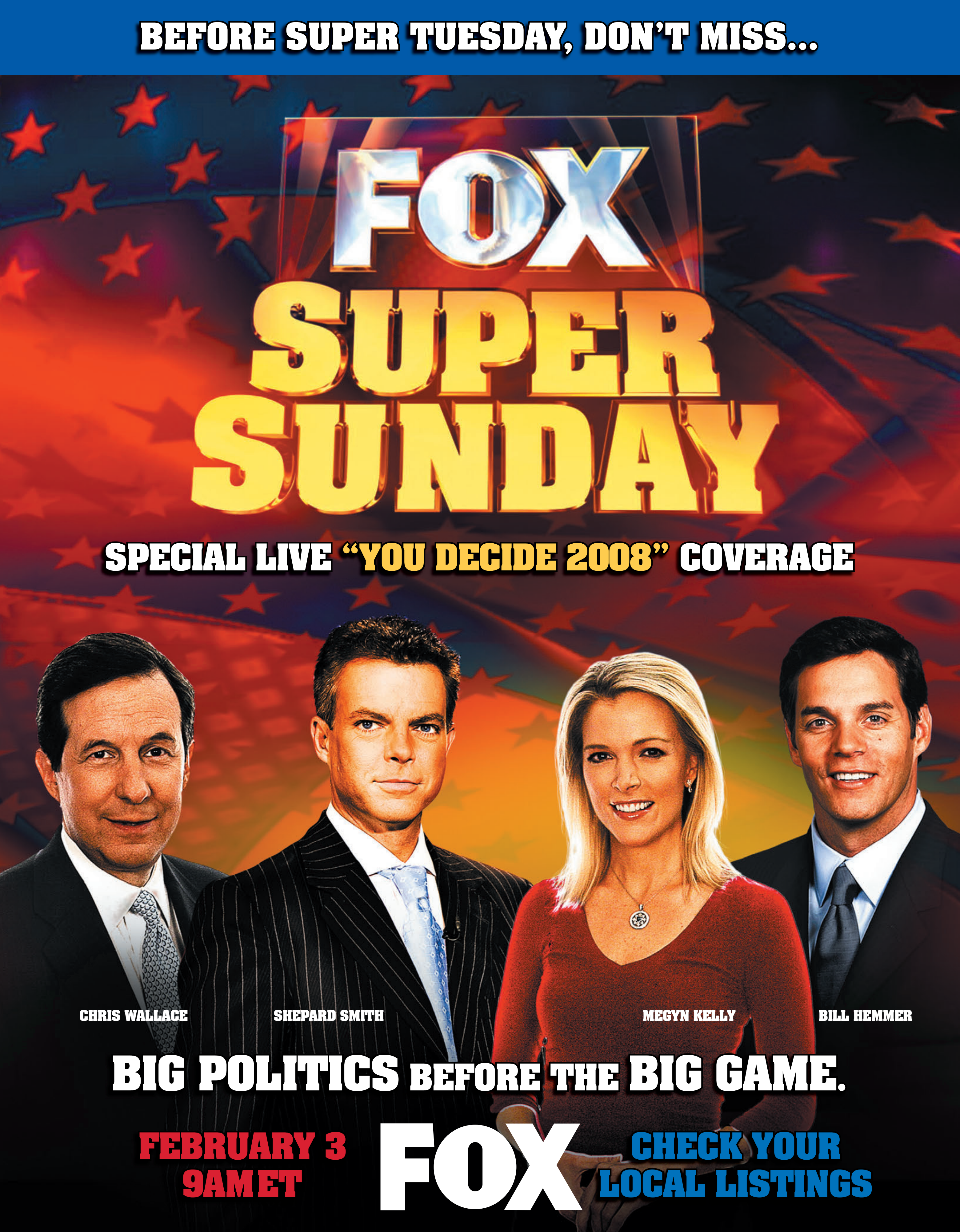
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■ **COVER STORY**

The Obama Appeal

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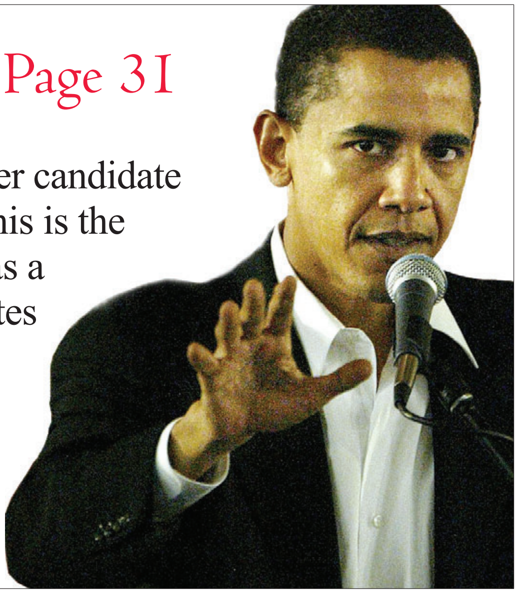
Sen. Barack Obama would plainly be a much stronger candidate in the general election than Hillary Clinton. In part this is the result of his personality. He is simply likeable. He has a kind of cool grace in almost all situations that indicates an underlying self-control remarkable in a relative novice. A blend of charm, grace, and steeliness also influences his ethnic image—and, to some degree, the scope of his political appeal. He is the candidate of a post-racist America. *By John O'Sullivan*



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COVER: *AP*

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letters to the editor

A LIFE IN LETTERS

In your January 28 issue ("The Week"), you refer to a letter to the editor that I wrote to the *New York Times*, published on January 3, 2008. You state that my claim of being "a life-long Republican until the candidacy of George W. Bush" is a lie. Where do you come off calling me a liar, when my published letter clearly states that I *was* a lifelong Republican *before* the candidacy of George W. Bush? I am extremely proud to be an activist and an independent voter in 2008. I am also quite proud of the fact that the *Times* (and other papers) have published 27 of my letters since 2003.

I voted for Ronald Reagan twice and George H. W. Bush twice. When the younger Bush became a candidate, I could not in good conscience continue to support the Republican party. I demand that you publish this letter with an apology, and refrain from calling people liars without any basis whatsoever to do so!

Henry A. Lowenstein
New York, N.Y.

THE EDITORS RESPOND:
Consider a few more nuggets from Mr. Lowenstein's missives to the Gray Lady. He says that "the money spent on the war in Iraq could cover a national health care program for all Americans." If only America had courageous leaders, he claims, they would "impose a $1-to-$3 increase in the tax on gasoline." He praises as "exemplary" John Kerry's "record on health care, the environment and jobs." He condemns the administration for trying to make sure that "every worthwhile, successful and fair entitlement program is eliminated." He decries "the folly of tax cuts." Yes, these letters were written after 2000; and yes, political allegiances change. But could a man who now favors higher taxes, nationalized health care, and John Kerry environmentalism have once supported Ronald Reagan or the Contract with America? Only if his political philosophy had undergone a radical shift. Of course, it would then be of no significance that the shift coincided with the ascendancy of George W. Bush, since Bush's policies on taxes, health care, entitlements, and the environment do not differ markedly from mainstream Republican positions of the past three decades. By calling himself a "lifelong Republican until the candidacy of George W. Bush," Mr. Lowenstein means to imply that he would still be one if not for that nefarious Dubya. We leave our readers to decide for themselves whether this is honest. They may wish to know that the New York City Board of Elections has records for only one Henry A. Lowenstein; that he registered to vote as an independent in 1998; and that there is no record of his voting in any Republican primary, or being registered as a Republican, between 1992 (the first year for which archives are readily accessible) and the present.

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.

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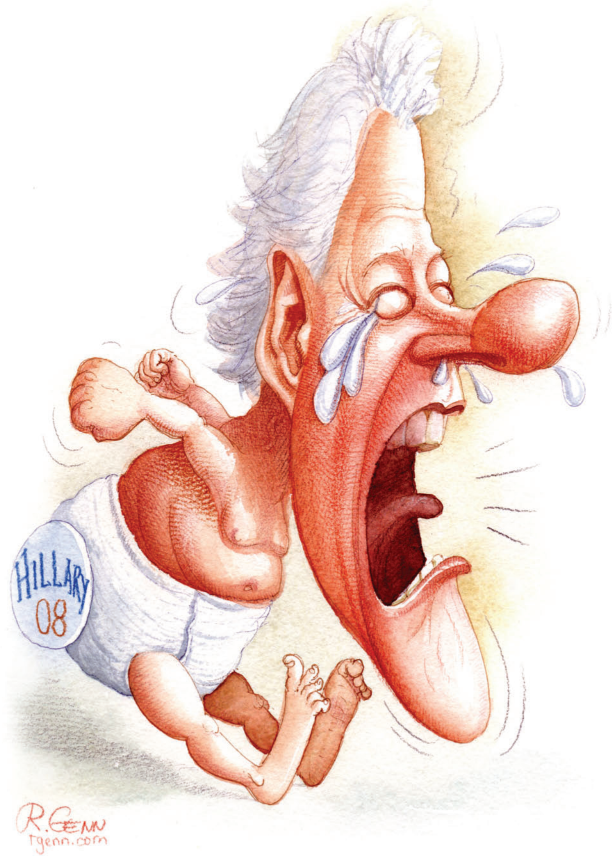
THE WEEK

■ In the Democratic presidential candidates' South Carolina debate, Hillary said, "I will make the commitment to have people in the White House who are honest and trustworthy." So where would she put Bill?

■ It's not at all clear that the economy is entering a recession. What we have here isn't trouble in the housing market that is spreading to other sectors of the economy so much as panic in stock markets and the press that is spreading to politicians. Everyone in Washington wants to appear to be "doing something" about the economy, so some sort of "stimulus" bill will probably pass. Temporary tax rebates are unlikely to accomplish anything important for non-politicians. We should instead try to make permanent improvements in the tax code, including a reduction in taxes on corporate investment coupled with a larger tax break for the cost of raising children. Conservatives should do what they can to channel the panic and posturing of the moment in a constructive direction.

■ Christians honor the Man of Sorrows. Post-Christians honor suffering: who felt it most, and who is entitled to the greatest recompense. The Democratic party is answering these questions in the caucus room and the polling place. Hillary Clinton is the surrogate of her sex: "a woman running to break the highest and hardest glass ceiling," as she said on *Meet the Press*. Barack Obama's camp meanwhile attacks attacks on him as racially motivated: When Bill Clinton called Obama's account of his opposition to the Iraq War a "fairy tale," and Mrs. Clinton said that wily pol Lyndon Johnson, rather than Martin Luther King Jr., had passed the Civil Rights Acts, both comments were depicted as racial slights. Lax immigration policy has produced a third suffering community, Hispanics, whom the Clinton camp cites as their anti-Obama firewall, even as the Obama camp has run Spanish-language ads in Nevada accusing Clinton supporters of disrupting the caucus of a largely Hispanic labor union. Hoist with his (and her) own petard, say conservatives, gleefully—and shortsightedly, for this noxious game afflicts us all.



ROMAN GENN

■ One interesting, perhaps prophetic, aspect of the Democratic spats is Bill Clinton's role. When a San FranciscoTV reporter bearded him about the Nevada caucuses, Clinton answered with a mix of do-you-know-who-I-am entitlement and schoolyard scrapping. "You have asked the question in an accusatory way, so I will ask you back. . . . So when you asked me that question, your position is. . . . So if that's your position, you have it. . . . Don't be accusatory with me." On other occasions, he gets red in the face. Of course the pressure he feels is intense: The family comeback hangs in the balance. But perhaps some of the pressure comes from his own ambivalence. If Hillary Clinton wins, the Clintons are vindicated. But if Hillary Clinton wins, Bill Clinton will be next to power, without sharing it. Will even a Supreme Court seat console him? One reason republicans oppose monarchy is to be free of the psychodramas of royal families—of Monsieur and Monseigneur and morganatic wives and royal mistresses. But with political dynasties, we can have it all over again, by our own choice.

■ John Edwards has become the incredible shrinking populist. The candidate's frenzied corporate-bashing in Iowa—a state always game for low-down populist pitches—hoisted him to a respectable second at 30 percent, which declined to 17 percent in New Hampshire, which declined to 4 percent in Nevada. He does not have an easy task in running against two celebrity candidates. But his message is so hard-edged—and so hard to credit, coming from a well-heeled trial lawyer who just yesterday was the upbeat healer of Democratic politics—that Edwards is self-discrediting. On Super Tuesday, after another two weeks of impassioned advocacy for the nation's despoiled poor, he will be an asterisk—which is right where he belongs.

■ Will Ron Paul be "read out" of the libertarian movement? James Kirchick of *The New Republic* performed a useful service

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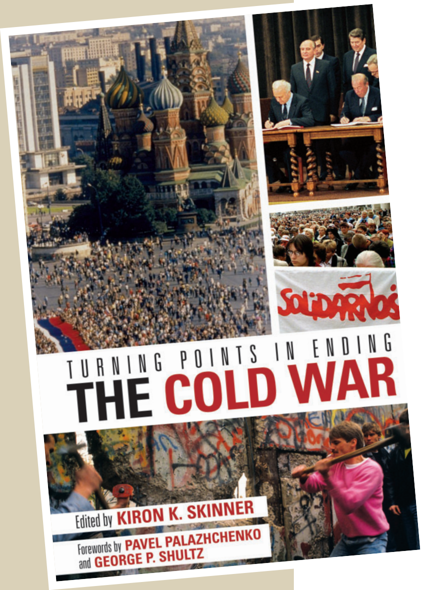

Turning Points in Ending the Cold War

EDITED BY KIRON K. SKINNER

Twenty years ago, in the early 1980s, no one could have imagined that only a decade later the cold war would be over. How did it happen? The essays in this collection offer illuminating insights into the key players–Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and others–and the monumental events that led to the collapse of communism.

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Kiron K. Skinner, is an associate professor of international relations at Carnegie Mellon University and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. She is a coauthor of the *New York Times* bestsellers, *Reagan, in His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan that Reveal His Revolutionary Vision of America* (with Annelise Anderson and Martin Anderson, 2001) and *Reagan, a Life in Letters* (with Annelise Anderson and Martin Anderson, 2003).

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THE WEEK...

by publicizing inflammatory passages from the *Ron Paul Political Report* and the *Ron Paul Survival Report.* The now-defunct newsletters featured familiar tropes from the fever swamps of conspiracy kookery, including speculation that Israeli agents were behind the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center. The newsletters also accused Martin Luther King Jr. of pedophilia and argued that police were able to quell the Rodney King riots only because blacks paused long enough to "pick up their welfare checks." Ron Paul would like to put all that behind him, of course, but he cannot: Even now he is not so much a libertarian candidate as the candidate of the anti-war fringe (or at least those among them who cannot contemplate Mike Gravel without giggling) and of Israel-hating conspiracy-mongers. NATIONAL REVIEW expended much energy in the '50s and '60s evicting the John Birch Society and other insalubrious elements from the conservative movement. Seeing the anti-Semites, bigots, and general riffraff who have congealed upon the cause of Ron Paul, it appears that our libertarian cousins have a similar chore to perform.

■ Nevada is one of twelve states that has voted in favor of medical marijuana, and on the eve of its caucus, the Marijuana Policy Project offered $20,000—$5,000 for the primaries, $5,000 for the general election, and $10,000 for a favorite charity—to Rudy Giuliani, John McCain, and Mitt Romney if they could prove that medical marijuana is dangerous, or needless—their positions when quizzed about it on the campaign trail. Mr. David McDonough, a registered patient who uses medical marijuana to treat chronic pain, said that any candidate who was willing "to raid and arrest me for using marijuana legally under state law and with my doctor's approval had better be able to explain why." None of the GOP hopefuls has made the effort. They have enough to explain in this cycle, without attempting impossibilities.

■ Sen. Larry Craig of Idaho pled guilty to disorderly conduct last August after he was accused of soliciting sex from an undercover cop in a bathroom at the Minneapolis–St. Paul airport. Since news of the incident got out, the senator has been trying to withdraw that plea. Having been refused by a judge, he has now filed an appeal. The ACLU is on the senator's side, and has filed a supporting brief, arguing that people who have sex in closed stalls in public restrooms "have a reasonable expectation of privacy." Um, if it's privacy they want, why not try someplace whose description does *not* begin with the word "public"?

■ There has been a good deal of controversy about voter-identification laws, and the Supreme Court recently heard a challenge to Indiana's policy. Civil-liberties groups claim the law—which mandates that each voter present a valid photo ID at the polls—places an unconstitutional burden on the poor and minorities, who might have a harder time getting IDs. The *New York Times* claims there are 13 to 22 million voting-age citizens without IDs, and they presumably skew left politically, so allegations of partisan politics abound. However, the law is in perfect accordance with common sense, and it seems the high court realizes this. As Todd Rokita, Indiana's secretary of state, wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the state provides free IDs to residents who cannot afford them. Those who forget their IDs or need more time to acquire them can cast provisional ballots and return to the polling place within ten days. Also, turnout has actually increased since the law's passage. Even Justice Anthony Kennedy remarked, "You want us to invalidate a statute on the ground that it's a minor inconvenience to a small percentage of voters?"

■ Last year, Judge Laurence Silberman threw out the D.C. handgun ban as a violation of the Second Amendment. The Supreme Court has now taken up the case, and the Bush administration has, surprisingly, weighed in against Judge Silberman. Solicitor general Paul Clement agrees with Silberman that the amendment protects an individual right to own guns but allows reasonable restrictions on that right. Clement says that the District's ban may violate the amendment. But he argues that the judge applied too strict a test to determine which regulations are permissible, and worries that this test will make it impossible to sustain even laws against machine guns. This argument seems highly implausible. But it has moved Clement to ask the Supreme Court to send the case back to lower courts, instructing them to apply a more lenient test. Perhaps the Court will take that advice. On one point, however, everyone should be clear: Any test that the D.C. law can pass is a test that any law, no matter how restrictive, can pass. If the courts allow the D.C. law to stand, in other words, it means that they are going to treat the Second Amendment as a dead letter.

■ It is one thing to allow foreigners to invest in U.S. companies. But what about foreign governments? You're going to be hearing a lot more about "sovereign wealth funds"—investment funds owned by governments—over the next few years. They are growing fast, both abroad and at home. (The governments of Alaska, Texas, and California have sizable investment holdings.) Chris Cox, the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, points out some of the dangers. Foreign governments generally cooperate with us when their citizens break our securities laws. If they break those laws themselves, they won't. Another danger is that governments, foreign and domestic, will pursue interests other than profit. To allay this danger, our friend Kevin Hassett suggests that Congress pass a law forbidding foreign governments to vote their shares. They would have to trust other shareholders to pursue the companies' interests, the same way investors in a mutual fund trust other people rather than voting themselves. Targeted remedies such as that one make more sense than going protectionist. Sovereign wealth funds complicate the case for free trade, but they leave intact the law of unintended consequences—so legislate carefully.

■ Visiting the Middle East, President Bush hoped to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, and also to strengthen the Gulf Arabs in the face of the Iranian

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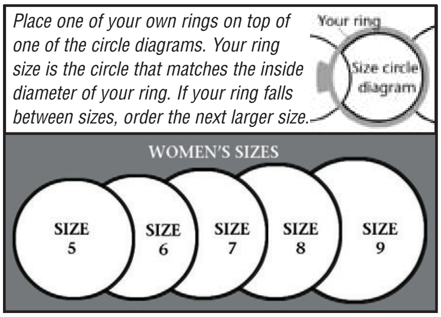

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threat. The objectives are worthy, but in present conditions neither is realistic. For the president to say that he expects peace and a Palestinian state to exist before the end of his term in office in a matter of months is to turn a blind eye to facts on the ground. Hamas and Fatah are fighting each other to a standstill. Israel has no choice but to defend itself as best it can against the daily shower of rockets and mortars fired from Gaza. Things are hardly better elsewhere. Lebanon is a no-go area. Syria is in Iran's pocket. Absent the courage or the unity to take steps to save themselves from Iran's going nuclear, the Arabs in the Gulf are in a state of panic. They can think of nothing to do except appease the mullahs of Tehran in public, while privately expecting, indeed imploring, the United States to ride to the rescue once more. The president's main speech to promote human rights and democracy was made in the preposterous setting of an Abu Dhabi hotel that cost $3 billion to build—the world's most expensive. Mission impossible.

■ The legislature of New Jersey voted to apologize for slavery (the state did not abolish slavery until 1846). The text of the resolution goes way beyond the 19th century, asserting that "the vestiges of slavery" are ever before us, from "the overt racism of hate groups" to the "indignities" of unjustified traffic stops. If Obama does not win the New Jersey primary, will that qualify as another vestige? When an evil is given such comprehensive penumbras, the original is trivialized. But consider slavery itself, the real thing. Lincoln asked, in his second inaugural address, if "every drop of blood drawn with the lash" need be "paid by another drawn with the sword." New Jersey supplied its quota of infantry, cavalry, and artillery units to the Civil War, and each gave its quota of killed in action and dead of disease. The bill was paid at Chancellorsville, Cold Harbor, and a hundred hellish hospitals. The rest is etiquette.

HEINZ RUCKEMANN/UPI

Tornado at a Frat Party

‘RECENT events," mused former Clinton impeachment lawyer Greg Craig, "raise the question: if Hillary's campaign can't control Bill, whether Hillary's White House could."

I love this. But it's worth remembering that Bill's White House couldn't control Bill either. Neither could Bill's wife, no matter how many lamps she hucked at him. Bill's conscience? That was ensconced in a Naugahyde Barcalounger eating a box of Ring Dings during much of his presidency. Meanwhile his id and his ego were Jell-O wrestling with two strippers from Reno and a cigar-smoking midget with a Ziploc bag full of male-enhancement party favors.

Bill is politically uncontrollable, morally incorrigible, and verbally incontinent. And he owns his dysfunction, requiring those around him to bend to his passive-aggressive personality. This ability can be almost metaphysical, in that he can redefine Being itself by calling "is" into question and get away with it. During the investigation that led to his impeachment, he brazenly insisted that his Secret Service agents needed to be exempt from reporting on the illegal behavior of the president, sworn officers of the law though they were. He'd say anything that came to his mind, and sell it as if he'd visited the burning bush itself. He once claimed he was the only person to occupy the Oval Office who knew anything about agriculture (scan your mental hard drive for all the presidents who actually owned farms—as opposed to ordering the farmer's breakfast at Cracker Barrel—and you'll see what I mean).

Bill's wife describes him as a force of nature, which is a nice way of rephrasing James McDougal's observation that the former first couple "are really sort of like tornadoes moving through people's lives. I'm just one of the people left in the wake of their passing by." (McDougal died of a heart attack in federal prison in 1998.)

Quite a few pundits have echoed Craig's concerns about having Bill in the White House again. And the concerns are legitimate. In the 1990s Bill often improvised informal pronunciamentos, as when he told the Greeks what should be done about the centuries-old Elgin Marbles dispute, in which America has no stake. He made up stories about meeting with Palestinian children who just wanted peace. He recalled church burnings in his native Arkansas that never happened. And of course there was his, umm, mentoring of a certain intern. The idea that Bill can stop being Bill *when he's not president* beggars belief. This time around, his life in the White House would look like a 24/7 frat party—and he wouldn't even have homework to do.

But forget about the White House. What will Bill be like in a general election? Already, serious political handicappers—even in the Hillary campaign—are split on the question of whether Bill is helping or hurting. And this is in the *Democratic primary.* The Democrats are still in large part a cargo cult for the Clinton administration. As we worry what it will be like having a tornado back in the White House, we should remember that the country has to decide first whether it wants one there. And if Bill keeps being Bill—and he will—it may decide it doesn't.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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THE WEEK...

■ The *New York Times* is apparently having so much trouble finding genuine examples of U.S. soldiers who commit atrocities abroad that it has decided to look for them at home: In a 6,300-word article, the newspaper claimed to document 121 cases of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who have been charged with murder in the United States. "They paint the patchwork picture of a quiet phenomenon, tracing a cross-country trail of death and heartbreak," wrote reporters Deborah Sontag and Lizette Alvarez. Bloggers were quick to point out that honest social-science research, as opposed to Pulitzer-sniffing opportunism, would require some contextualization. The *Times* neglected to mention that when these veterans are placed within an appropriate cohort of young adults, for instance, their crime rates are well below the national average. So instead of performing what could have been a useful public service—highlighting ways in which the military might improve its delivery of mental-health services to veterans—the *Times* chose to bash the troops.

PGA

■ On the Golf Channel, Kelly Tilghman, an anchorwoman, and Nick Faldo, a legend of the game, were having a chat. They were talking about what other golfers might do to stop Tiger Woods. Faldo quipped, "Maybe they should just gang up [on him] for a while." Tilghman, laughing, said, "Lynch him in a back alley." Whoops. Tilghman entered Al Campanis territory, becoming a certifiable Bad Thing in America. She apologized profusely. Tiger Woods, through his agent, said, essentially, "No problem." He and Tilghman are friends. He knows that she meant no harm. But the Rev. Al Sharpton, in his role as racial ambulance-chaser, came on the scene and demanded that Tilghman be fired. The Golf Channel, snapping to, suspended her for two weeks. Then, *Golfweek*—an important publication in this world—published a cover story on the affair. On the cover was a picture of a noose. Whoops again. A storm ensued—another one—and the editor was fired. The nation can rest easier.

■ A new study says that mandatory diversity training backfires: After looking at data from 830 workplaces, researchers discovered that sensitivity seminars and their ilk led to declines in the number of women and minorities in management. Black men seemed to suffer the most. When their colleagues attended mandatory sessions on just how hard it is for different kinds of folks to get along, their ranks thinned by 12 percent. The worst offenders, according to the study, are corporations that parrot a politically correct mantra for the sake of fending off discrimination lawsuits. It raises the prospect of a delicious irony, if women and minorities start to sue employers that make everyone suffer through workshops on color consciousness.

■ Allow us to offer Canada's "human-rights commissions" a slogan: "We may disapprove of what you say—and if we do we'll make you pay." No, it's not entirely original, but it does have the virtue of being true. In recent months, the publishers of *Maclean's*, a Canadian magazine, have been hauled before two such commissions. Their offense was to print an excerpt from Mark Steyn's book *America Alone*. This led Mohamed Elmasry, an Egyptian-born Canadian professor and imam who has said that any adult Jew in Israel is a legitimate target of terrorist attack, to file a complaint against the magazine. The case is still pending. Now Ezra Levant, former publisher of the defunct *Western Standard* magazine, faces similar persecution. His sin was to reprint the Danish cartoons that in 2006 prompted crowds of angry Muslims to torch embassies hither and yon. A complaint against Levant was filed by the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, and he potentially faces stiff fines and the indignity of being compelled to apologize. Isn't it fine to live in the West, where everybody has a right to free speech?

■ Those who were unable to attend the 2006 Pyongyang Film Festival missed a treat: a tender dramedy titled *The Schoolgirl's Diary*, one of the two films produced in North Korea that year. With a script that is reported to include contributions from Dear Leader Kim Jong Il himself, the movie tells the story of a high-school lass who questions her parents' values but sees the light at last, embarking on a life of patriotism and filial piety. French movie distributor James Velaise was so taken by *The Schoolgirl's Diary* that he picked up international rights to the film, and has put it in general release. It shows another side of North Korean culture, explained M. Velaise. "They're not all out to do nuclear crazy things. There are normal people in that country." Who ever doubted it? Many, if not most, of the 2 million North Koreans who died in the famines of recent years were surely normal; probably a majority of the 200,000 or so labor-camp inmates are normal; the ragged, starving refugees who trek over frozen mountains to escape North Korea are likely quite normal. Will Pyongyang make movies about *them*? If it did, would M. Velaise snap them up for worldwide distribution?

■ The *Village Voice* is celebrating a half century of reporting and commentary by Nat Hentoff. He has long been a jazz fan, a free-speech absolutist, and a self-described socialist. We will take one from Column A, half of one from Column B, and none from Column C. In the early '80s, he added another conviction to his repertoire—the defense of human life. Time and again, in venues perhaps least disposed to hear it, Hentoff has championed the weak, the voiceless, the dying, the unborn. John Cardinal O'Connor, Hentoff's dear friend, once told him that the pro-life movement could not afford to lose him: "We don't have many pro-life, Jewish, atheist civil libertarians." They won't lose him, as long as he lives and writes, which we hope will be years yet.

■ New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art announced that director Philippe de Montebello will retire at the end of 2008, after 31 years on the job. Montebello excelled at all the un-artsy arts of administration—collecting, fundraising, showmanship—while never losing sight of the museum's mission: to display the best and most beautiful work of human hands. Beauty speaks for itself, but it needs help: for the art world, no less than the world

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of politics, is subject to storms of fashion and dogma. In 1999, when the Brooklyn Museum presented a collection of trendy crap (one item showed the Virgin Mary smeared with elephant dung), Mayor Rudy Giuliani huffed and puffed, to no avail. What would a pol know? Montebello urged people not to be "cowed by the art establishment" in the face of works that were "repulsive or unaesthetic." In the art world, only he said so, and only he had the clout to be heard. New York, and the national art scene, will miss him.

■ Okay, so this Polish guy walks into a brothel and finds his wife working as a call girl. According to the Reuters news agency, that actually happened recently, and Poland's gag writers must be on strike too, because the shocked husband could come up with no better punch line than, "What are you doing here?" It is unclear whether the prurient Pole employed his wife in her professional capacity, but if so he is a true supply-sider, since every capitalist knows that paid employees work harder than volunteers. In a romantic comedy the couple would reconcile, but in real life, sad to say, they are divorcing. We leave it to Oprah and Dr. Phil to determine which is the aggrieved party.

■ When Philip Agee died in early January, Reuters called him a "whistleblower." Oh, is that what he was? Agee was a CIA agent who turned against his employer, and his country, and published *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. The year was 1975. Agee's book exposed CIA agents around the world, and some of them came to harm, as did U.S. efforts in general. Agee said that he did not write the book in order to serve the KGB; instead he wrote it to serve "revolutionary organizations in the United States, in Latin America, and everywhere else." In other words, he joined the other side—he wanted a Communist world. And he was a huge *cause célèbre* on the American left—toasted in salons from Berkeley to Bowdoin. In 2003, he was trotted out by the *Los Angeles Times* to write about the Valerie Plame affair. The exposure of Plame was "dirty politics," he said; what he did was noble. Agee ended up under the protection of Fidel Castro in Cuba, where he died. Upon his death, Castro's paper hailed him as a "loyal friend of Cuba and staunch defender of the peoples' [*sic*] struggle for a better world." He was a loyal friend of the Cuban dictatorship, to be sure. But he was no defender of people's struggle for a better world. The world he wanted was the world of Cuba itself. May Philip Agee now be dealt with more kindly than he dealt with others. R.I.P.

■ Bobby Fischer's 1972 world-championship chess match with Boris Spassky in Reykjavik was rightly seen as a Cold War allegory. Spassky, the product of Russian chess culture brought to machine-tooled efficiency by the Soviet Union, faced the unbounded American individualist. After a disastrous start—Fischer lost Game One with a blunder, and forfeited Game Two after complaining that the television cameras distracted him—he roared back to win 12½ points to 8½. (Rather like a baseball score of 20–5.) Fischer's tenure in the limelight showed, however, that he was not bound by common sense or sanity. He was stripped of his title after setting impossible conditions for its defense, then went into mad seclusion, emerging periodically to move to a different country, or to denounce America or Jews (Fischer was Jewish himself). Is even genius worth such squalor? Dead at 64. Rest, perturbed spirit.

PICTUREARTS

■ In April 1958, Americans were lining up outside department stores waiting for the latest delivery of Hula-Hoops. The craze lasted only a few months. By September the manufacturer, Wham-O, was stuck with millions of unsold hoops. Wham-O soon came back, marketing the Frisbee, to which they had bought rights in 1957. Other Wham-O products were less successful. Who now remembers the Wham-O Do-it-Yourself Bomb Shelter Kit, or the Wham-O Instant Fish (consisting of dried fish eggs and some mud to grow them in)? But in the annals of entrepreneurship, and for their contributions to the world's stock of harmless pleasure, the men who brought us the Hula-Hoop and the Frisbee deserve high honors. Wham-O was founded by Arthur Melin and Richard Knerr. Melin died in 2002; Knerr, just this past January 14. R.I.P., and thanks for the fun.

■ If Napoleon met Goethe with the words "*Voilà, un homme*," what would he have said about Sir Edmund Hillary? With a summit of six feet and five inches, the New Zealander *looked* like a mountain. Along with Tenzing Norgay, his Sherpa climbing partner, he won fame in 1953 for conquering the tallest of them: Mt. Everest, 29,035 feet high and seemingly made to kill. Many had died trying to climb it before him; many would die after. Add to the raw statistics the fact that climbing Himalayan peaks in '50s gear is approximately like performing heart surgery with kitchen utensils, and you begin to understand the magnitude of the duo's achievement. Hillary himself summed it up memorably: "Well, we've knocked the bastard off." He would devote the rest of his life to further adventures, and to charitable work among the Sherpa people, for whom he created a foundation that has built schools and hospitals throughout the Everest region. A great man and a good one, Sir Edmund was also modest, preferring to be called Ed. "I have had a dream and it has come true, and that is not a thing that happens often to men." Dead at 88. R.I.P.

2008

A National Primary

Six states have voted in the Republican nomination contest, and the field has merely been winnowed. Former senator Fred Thompson dropped out, having run an honorable campaign but also shown his distaste for presidential politics. We were always skeptical of former governor Mike Huckabee's chances, but it took his loss in South Carolina to make nearly everyone share that skepticism.

It is now a two-and-a-half-man race. Sen. John McCain has a

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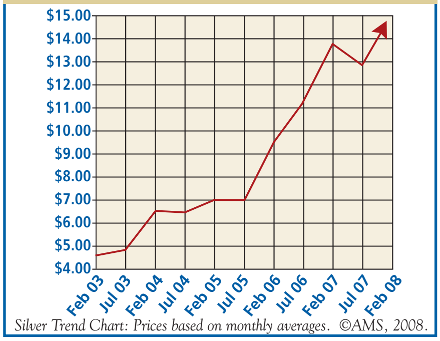

Silver Trend Chart: Prices based on monthly averages. ©AMS, 2008.

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lead in national polls and has won two contested primaries. Former governor Mitt Romney has the most delegates, the most popular votes, and the most money. On the sidelines is former mayor Rudolph Giuliani. He is running fourth in the national polls and has only one delegate.

If Giuliani wins the next big contest, the Florida primary, he could revive his campaign and do well on Super Tuesday. (Beating McCain, while losing to Romney, might also keep his candidacy alive.) His tactics are being second-guessed, but those tactics were the inevitable result of his fundamental political flaw. He could not compete in Iowa, New Hampshire, or South Carolina because he is not a good fit for the Republican party nationally.

McCain's supporters are telling one another that his victories in New Hampshire and South Carolina prove that he can ignore and isolate conservative opinion leaders such as Rush Limbaugh. That's what they said when he won primaries in 2000, too, and McCain paid dearly for listening to them. Our guess is that the voters who are leaving Huckabee and Thompson will go disproportionately to Romney. McCain has yet to win a plurality of self-identified conservatives anywhere.

McCain will never win over all conservatives, even if he gets the nomination. But he can reassure conservatives if he pledges to name a conservative running mate and identifies respected conservative legal figures to whom he will turn when nominating judges. He can promise to approach immigration reform piecemeal rather than comprehensively. He should say that strong evidence that the illegal-immigrant population is shrinking will have to arrive before he legalizes any large segment of that population. And he can acknowledge that scientific advances have weakened the case for federal funding of embryonic-stem-cell research.

Governor Romney's chances have been discounted because he left South Carolina before its primary. But his choice may have been shrewd, or at least may have reflected an accurate understanding of the race. By not doing everything in his power to stop McCain from winning South Carolina, he increased the likelihood that McCain would get the flattering media attention we call "momentum." But it has become clearer and clearer in recent weeks that the outcome of this race is more likely to be determined by who won the most delegates than by who won pivotal states. As the most conservative viable candidate, Romney is still in a good position to win that contest.

AT WAR

Benchmarked

For a year, critics of the Iraq War have insisted that whether the Iraqi government meets political benchmarks is the most important measure of success. It didn't matter if the central government was sharing money with the provinces or Sunnis were being reintegrated into security functions. What mattered was whether the Iraqi central government had passed legislation mandating those steps, as the benchmarks required. The Government Accountability Office even produced a checklist—literally, a checklist—of benchmarks that the Iraqi government had failed to meet.

Now the standard for judging political progress has changed. The Iraqi parliament has just passed a de-Baathification law that would allow low-level former Baathists, mostly Sunnis, to re-enter the government. This law had been included in every list of what the Iraqi government needed to do to achieve political reconciliation. It will take effect as soon as the five-person presidency council has, as expected, approved it.

The critics' latest tack is to say that the law is unsatisfactory to both Sunnis and Shiites, who interpret it in different ways. Compromises unsatisfactory to multiple sides are of course a regular feature of stable, mature democracies, and even more so of ones riven by sectarian hatred and horrific violence. The critics say that the law may perversely allow the Shiites to purge even more Sunnis from security and legal institutions. But if the government wanted to chase out more Sunnis, it would already have done so. The de-Baathification law is hardly perfect, but it is an important gesture toward reconciliation.

Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are peddling the idea that their advocacy of a troop drawdown has spooked Iraqis into behaving better. No one on the ground believes this fairy tale.

One reason critics of the war have fastened on benchmarks is that all the security indicators have been moving in the right direction. According to military officials, 75 percent of Baghdad's neighborhoods are secure. Around the country, civilian deaths are down 75 percent, while attacks on American troops are down 60 percent since June. Al-Qaeda has been routed from its strongholds in much of the country, and is having trouble mounting its trademark spectacular attacks.

As Wesley Morgan writes elsewhere in this issue, this progress is the result of a brilliant counterinsurgency campaign including, but not limited to, increased troop levels. Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are peddling the idea that their advocacy of a troop drawdown has spooked Iraqis into behaving better. No one on the ground believes this fairy tale, and Amb. Ryan Crocker has explicitly rejected it. If not for the surge, violence would have continued to spiral out of control, and the country's politics would have become ever more balkanized.

President Bush is committed to returning to pre-surge troop levels by July, but we should not go beneath them until we know that progress on the ground can be maintained. From the perspective of a year ago, conditions in Iraq now are nearly miraculous. Many challenges remain—from resolving the dispute over the city of Kirkuk to creating an effective, nonsectarian central government to going farther down the road to political reconciliation—but the strategic goal of eventually creating a stable ally in the Arab heartland is looking more achievable. That benchmark is the one that should matter most.

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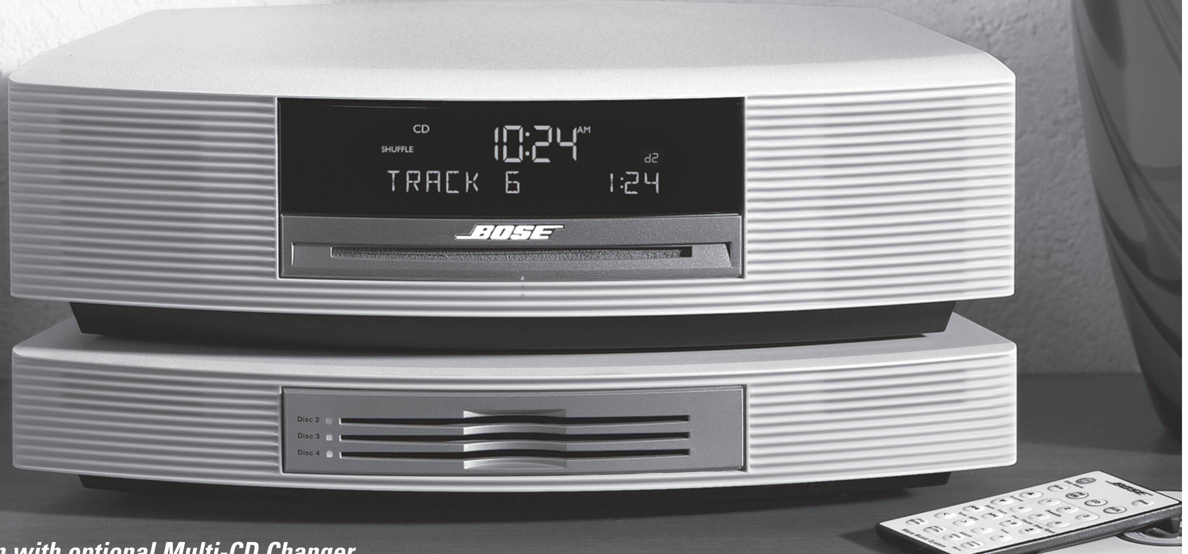

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ABORTION

One Fight, Two Fronts

Two news items illustrated the state of the debate over the sanctity of human life during the week leading up to the 35th anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*. It was reported that the abortion rate has continued to decline. It is down 25 percent since its 1990 peak. And scientists in the United States created a human embryo through cloning. It was an advance for the project of using cloned embryos to produce stem cells for medical research.

Pro-lifers have made real strides in fighting abortion. Over the last 15 years, modest pro-life policy victories have been achieved, particularly in state legislatures; public sentiment has moved in a pro-life direction; and the number of abortions has fallen. It is hard to believe that these things happened in tandem by accident. It is more likely that each trend reinforced the others, and that all three were influenced by other factors, such as the spread of better and better ultrasound technology. The Supreme Court continues effectively to guarantee a right to abortion for any reason, at any stage of pregnancy—and it does so without any plausible constitutional warrant. Given that constraint, it is impressive how much pro-lifers have done to limit the damage that the Court has wrought to our politics and culture.

The Supreme Court continues effectively to guarantee a right to abortion for any reason, at any stage of pregnancy—and it does so without any plausible constitutional warrant. Given that constraint, it is impressive how much pro-lifers have done to limit the damage.

To continue to succeed, however, they must continue to elect presidents who are committed either to pro-life policies or at least to the overturning of *Roe*, and senators who are willing to confirm Supreme Court justices who would act accordingly. Under this year's circumstances, that is going to be a tall order. And even so it will not be enough.

For during the very period that pro-lifers have been winning on one front, another has opened. If we begin to mass-produce cloned human embryos—which would be living members of our species—to be destroyed in research, we could easily undo all of our success in reducing the number of legal killings in this country. And worse: It seems highly unlikely that a society that countenances such routinized destruction of human life would limit abortion.

It is commonly said that the public favors stem-cell research. But most people do not favor human cloning, and do not favor the creation of embryos for research purposes—at least when the subject is placed before them squarely and without euphemism. It has become increasingly clear that the medical benefits sought through cloning can be gained without violating ethical principles. Stem cells derived from the reprogramming of adult cells and from amniotic fluid both show great promise. Human cloning should be banned, and these alternatives encouraged.

We have seen a marked decline in abortion without any of the calamities that its defenders might have predicted. There has been no surge in the number of "unwanted children," for example. Every year, we are getting closer to proving that the country can get by just fine without abortion. We don't need cloning, either.

OBITUARY

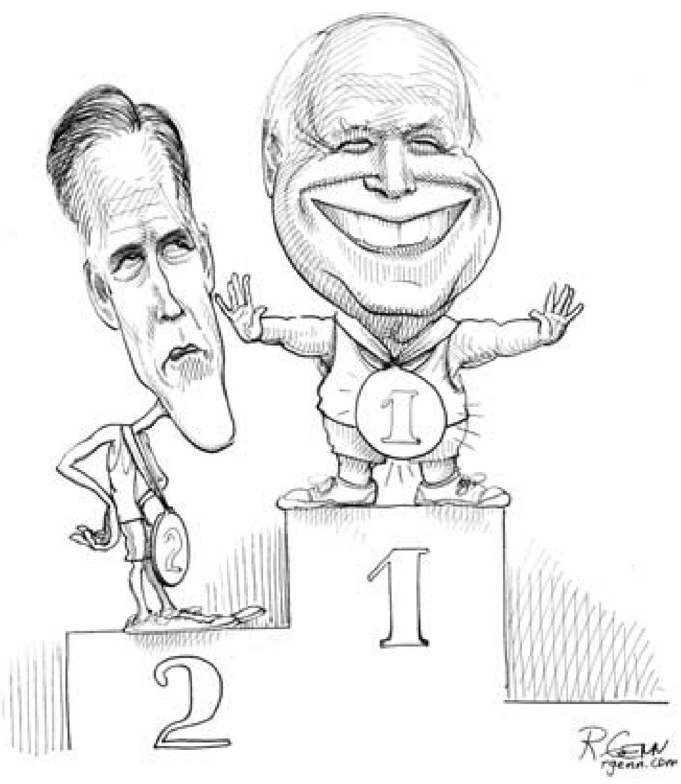
Evan Galbraith, R.I.P.

Van Galbraith's credentials were pretty impressive. We were classmates at Yale and then he went to Harvard Law School. After that came service as a naval officer, in the folds of the CIA. Then a top law firm in New York City, and on to London, where he represented his firm and did private business. But his interest in public affairs was irresistible, and when Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president, Galbraith was sworn in as ambassador to France, abandoning even his post as chairman of the board of trustees of National Review. After Paris, back to the law and to business, but soon he was in Europe again, this time in Brussels as defense adviser to the U.S. mission at NATO. He pulled away from that in November, and died January 21 in New York of problems that traced to a cancer discovered, but not arrested, years ago.

A deskbound life? Hardly. He made four transoceanic passages with me on sailboats, performing duties at sea without ever learning, quite, how to sail. We skied together every winter and his proficiency there was that of an expert. He wrote and published two books and loved to give advice, oracular in tone, shrewd in conception—underestimated only by those of invincible ignorance who set his advice aside. They included an illustrious if wrongheaded company of presidents and kings and commissars.

In one enterprise he was unfailing. Everyone he knew came up upon his brightness of spirit. The acuity of his wit was always inflected through his personal generosity. When you add the hours at sea and the snows traversed together to the classroom work taken jointly, I must have spent more time with Evan Galbraith than with any other human being outside my family. The loss to his own family is awful to contemplate, while the pleasures he gave, in his seven decades, to all he brushed up against are as incalculable as the depths of his laughter and the joy he gave to the world.

—WFB



■ 2008 ■

Maverick No More

But will conservatives embrace John McCain?

BYRON YORK

Columbia, S.C.

Bob Royall is as establishment as you get in South Carolina. Born and raised here, a graduate of the University of South Carolina, the retired chairman of the National Bank of South Carolina, and a former state secretary of commerce, Royall is known and respected by pretty much everybody. In 2000, when the time came to support a Republican presidential candidate, Royall chose George W. Bush, becoming W's state finance chairman and helping him beat back the challenge from Sen. John McCain. This time around, as the primary approached, Royall chose to head the finance committee of another contender: McCain.

Why Bush then and McCain now? "It's eight years later, and we've got a different ball game," Royall tells me a couple of days after McCain's South Carolina victory. "My concentration first and foremost is on the security of this country, and I really feel that McCain is by far the strongest leader in that regard." Back in 2000, Royall explains, he felt Bush the businessman—and political legacy—was the better choice. "I was more concerned with economic matters back then, and the fact that I had known [Bush's] father quite well," Royall says.

The course Royall followed from Bush to McCain says a lot about why McCain won here, and it might—might—indicate that McCain, for all the things he has done over the years to irritate his own party, could become an acceptable candidate to true-blue Republicans.

Everybody knows McCain has alienated conservatives on a number of big issues. Illegal immigration, tax cuts, campaign-finance reform—he has split with the party on all three, and all have hurt him in this campaign. At every stop, he has to mend fences not only with establishment figures, the leaders who can offer endorsements and fundraising clout, but with members of the party base, many of whom think he would rather win favor from the *New York Times* than from conservatives.

All of that has made McCain anathema to some of the most powerful voices in conservatism today. Rush Limbaugh, for example, has used his program to hit McCain on a pretty regular basis. A few days before the voting in South Carolina began, he said of McCain and Mike Huckabee, "I'm here to tell you, if either of these two guys get the nomination, it's going to destroy the Republican party, it's going to change it forever, be the end of it. A lot of people aren't going to vote. You watch." Those are not idle words, coming from a man who reaches millions of Republicans every day.

McCain started his repair work with the elites in advance. "Two or three years ago, even before we knew for sure that McCain was going to run, we started talking to some of the folks who had been involved with Bush last time," says Richard Quinn, McCain's longtime South Carolina consultant. Quinn came "with a what-if kind of message, saying that if Senator McCain runs next time, can we be on the same team? We were very successful." Along with Royall, McCain signed up nearly all the other leaders of Bush's old finance team, along with top state officials and business leaders. He also picked up endorsements from the state's three biggest newspapers—the *State* in Columbia, the *Greenville News*, and the *Charleston Post and Courier*. (The *State* and the *News* endorsed Bush in 2000.) McCain, the old maverick, became the establishment candidate.

But then there were the voters. In 2000, in a two-man race, Bush clobbered McCain among Republicans, 69 to 26 percent. This time, with essentially a four-man race, no one was able to pile up a total like Bush's, and McCain won 31 percent of Republicans, second only to Mike Huckabee's 32 percent. (Among

ROMAN GENN

independents, McCain won with 42 percent, after winning with 60 percent in 2000.)

Given all his problems, a virtual tie among Republicans looked like a victory to McCain's team. "Here we are in South Carolina, arguably the most conservative Republican state in the country, and John McCain split the self-identified Republicans against a southern candidate who had a strong appeal to evangelicals," says Quinn. "To me, that is just amazing."

At a McCain rally in Columbia on a cold, rainy day shortly before the primary, nearly everyone I met had voted for Bush in the 2000 primary. "The fact that his father was president swayed me [in 2000]," said Ron Spell, a local realtor. Now, when Spell thinks of McCain, he sees a strong commander in chief. "I think he believes in a strong military, and that's what it takes," Spell said. "You don't win by being weak." Another former Bush voter, retired firefighter Aaron Small, said he hoped McCain's "military background would be an asset to us. We just need to get our country turned around, and I think that he's the man to do it." And yet another Bush voter, Maxine Heifner, said she thought McCain "would have been much more prepared" to prosecute the war in Iraq.

These are not liberals, and they are not independents. But McCain, while winning among people who called themselves moderates, and among those who called themselves somewhat conservative, did lose among voters who called themselves very conservative. That group went strongly for Huckabee, and even Fred Thompson—who was a distant third in the overall vote—edged out McCain.

> Yes, voters take specific issues into account when they choose a candidate. But in the end, just before Election Day, many of them sit back, look at the whole thing, and choose the guy their gut tells them is right for the job.

What is the message from that? After the election, some commentators used the exit poll results to suggest that McCain can't appeal to conservatives. But if that's the case, then the obvious choice would be Huckabee, who is unacceptable to many of the commentators who also dislike McCain. And the man who is favored by some to fit that conservative bill, Mitt Romney, actually placed fourth in the estimation of very conservative voters in South Carolina. The bottom line is that there really isn't a clear bottom line.

But there is one clue to be found in the votes of people who oppose some of McCain's high-profile positions. Among those voters who named illegal immigration as the most important issue in the campaign, 24 percent voted for McCain, against 33 percent for Huckabee, 21 percent for Thompson, and 16 percent for Romney. And among those who said the economy was most important—likely supporters of the Bush tax cuts—McCain tied Huckabee, 32 percent to 32 percent, with Romney at 17 percent and Thompson at 12 percent.

Those figures suggest that people who disagreed with McCain on some fundamental issues still voted for him. Nobody knows exactly why, but one guess is that there is an unmeasurable factor that favors McCain more than any other Republican candidate. Yes, voters take specific issues into account when they choose a candidate. But in the end, just before Election Day, many of them sit back, look at the whole thing, and choose the guy their gut tells them is right for the job. For many conservatives, the deciding factors come down to national security and patriotism. Who would be the best commander in chief? McCain usually runs away with that category, because nobody can talk about duty, honor, and country like John McCain. When he brings up those basic values, he's got more credibility than all the other candidates combined. In the end, that makes the difference with some voters.

Will it in the races to come? And would it in a general election, if McCain won the nomination? Maybe. But McCain knows that if he is to have any chance of getting there, he'll have to keep working to earn the support of conservatives. Without them, he'll never win. **NR**

■ **2008 II**

Minnesota Standoff

The specter of a brokered convention haunts the Republican field

DAVID FREDDOSO

In *The Guide for the Perplexed,* the 12th-century Jewish philosopher Maimonides asked his readers to imagine a boy whose mother had died in childbirth, and who was raised on an island inhabited only by men. Such a child, Maimonides said, could easily doubt the existence of such a thing as a "woman," simply because he had never seen one. This is, more or less, how pundits have contemplated the idea of a brokered Republican convention this fall: We've never seen it happen, and so it cannot happen.

It is time to reevaluate that belief.

After his win in New Hampshire, John McCain enjoyed a sudden surge in the national polls and in several key states—not just in Oklahoma, but also in Rudy Giuliani's home turf of New York and New Jersey. Even so, McCain is not anything like a prohibitive front-runner going into Florida. He still trails Mitt Romney in the delegate count.

As we go to press, Florida has not been decided. But there are two possible outcomes in the Sunshine State on January 29. Either John McCain wins and shortly becomes the nominee—giving the pundit class a few months' rest—or a long, bloody delegate hunt consumes the entire spring on the Republican side. The latter outcome would almost guarantee that no candidate secures the 1,191 delegates needed to secure the nomination on the first round at the convention this fall. That would almost certainly result in an exciting "brokered" convention, in which no single candidate shows up in St. Paul this September with enough delegates to win the nomination on the first round of voting. The usual result of a brokered convention is a round of feverish insider

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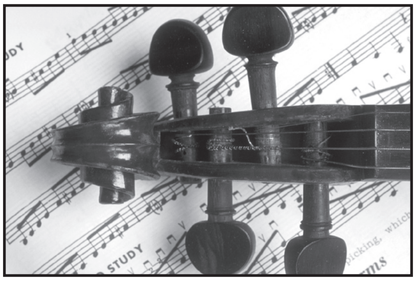
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About Your Professor

Professor Robert Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California, Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in Music Composition. He has composed more than 45 works and has lectured for many prestigious musical and arts organizations. He is music historian-in-residence with San Francisco Performances, the city's premier presenter of chamber music, instrumental and vocal recitals, jazz, and contemporary dance.

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bargaining, with everything from ambassadorships to Cabinet posts offered to the political players who can deliver the delegates necessary for a candidate to secure the nomination. Even the vice presidency could end up on the bargaining table.

No one can even be sure how this would play out, since the primary process has allowed Republicans to avoid such a spectacle for 60 years: The last brokered GOP convention resulted in the nomination of Dewey in 1948, though Ford narrowly avoided a convention battle when he edged out Reagan in 1976 despite failing to win a majority of the delegates in the primaries. Can the Republicans avoid a showdown in Minnesota? For the first time anyone can remember, it may actually be significant that Iowa's 40 delegates have not yet been allocated and will not be until the state GOP convention in June. Campaigns could even return to Iowa this spring to influence the state's county and district conventions. Suddenly, it matters much more than anyone had imagined that the five states being punished by the Republican National Committee for moving up their primaries—New Hampshire, Michigan, Florida, Wyoming, and South Carolina—lost half their delegates as a result.

Super Tuesday could begin—and end—without a clear GOP winner.

According to national and state polls, McCain is best positioned to win Florida and run away with the nomination. But if he fails to do so, then Super Tuesday will almost certainly begin—and end—without a clear winner. Republican voters in each state will enter the booth without knowing the outcome in any of the other states, so even if they want to coalesce around a candidate, there may be no obvious frontrunner to back.

There will be 2,380 delegates at the convention, so the barest majority would equal half of that number plus one, or 1,191 delegates. Super Tuesday will allot 1,226 delegates in addition to those that will have already been awarded in the earlier primaries and caucuses. After Super Tuesday, 1,484 of the 2,380 total delegates will have been awarded, and any candidate with fewer than 300 delegates will be mathematically eliminated from winning a majority. But that fact won't stop any of the candidates from bringing his pledged delegates to the convention this fall to engage in a bit of horse-trading.

What happens if someone other than McCain wins Florida? We cannot know for sure, but here are a few scenarios that illustrate how difficult it would be for anyone to win a majority of delegates.

Giuliani: Rudy has been out of the news for so long that even a big win and the Sunshine State's 57 delegates won't guarantee him anything further. Pundits spoke of how he would then make a late stand in the "large, delegate-rich states," but evidently they paid little mind to how those states award their delegates.

In Texas (140 delegates), which awards delegates by district and statewide according to a complicated proportional formula, Giuliani has little chance of taking even third place. A similar situation exists in California, home not to one big race but to 53 little ones—one in each of the state's congressional districts, which award three delegates apiece. These will determine how 159 of the state's 173 delegates are awarded. Giuliani is running fifth there according to Rasmussen.

If Giuliani can hold off McCain and win New York's 101 delegates and New Jersey's 52 (both winner-take-all), he might finish Super Tuesday with more than 300 delegates. At that level, he would have scarcely any chance of winning the nomination outright, but 15 percent of the delegates could make him a real player in the convention this fall.

Romney: CNN had given him 72 delegates after the Nevada contest was over. But even if he wins Florida's 57 delegates, his only obvious victories on February 5 are Utah (36 delegates, winner-take-all) and Massachusetts (43 delegates, awarded proportionally). This will already put him near 200.

The rest of Romney's delegates would have to come from less obvious victories. He could take congressional districts in states such as California and Georgia (72 delegates, by district and statewide), and then some from states where delegates are split up proportionally—Texas, Alabama (48), and Tennessee (55). Caucus states on February 5 include Alaska (29), North Dakota (26), Montana (25), Minnesota (41), and Colorado (46). Don't forget Maine (21) and Hawaii (20), which hold week-long caucuses. All of these will divide their delegates among the top finishers.

If Romney can cobble together 400 delegates by the end of February 5, his fat wallet puts him in the best position of any candidate to keep in the race. But unless he has 500 or more delegates after Super Tuesday, he will probably be forced into a brokered convention.

Huckabee: If Mike Huckabee wins Florida, the entire Republican establishment is likely to swing into action to stop him, even if that means getting behind McCain. He could perform well—probably better than Romney—in the Southern states mentioned above, most of which are proportional. Unfortunately for him, his home state of Arkansas awards its 34 delegates proportionally, too.

A strong win in Georgia would be required for Huckabee, along with victories in Oklahoma (41) and Missouri (58), both winner-take-alls. He will surely win some congressional districts in Illinois (70) and California.

It is not impossible for Huckabee to have more than 300 delegates after Super Tuesday. But he lacks organization in many of the Super Tuesday states that he will need—especially the caucus states, which are particularly time-consuming to campaign in. Huckabee's funds should be so badly depleted after Super Tuesday that further success will be unlikely. But he has managed so far to make much out of little.

McCain: After his South Carolina win, CNN gave McCain 38 delegates. After a Florida loss, he would still be well positioned to take all of the delegates from Arizona (53), secure a plurality of California's 173, and snag perhaps a third of the 525 at stake in the proportional and caucus states. He and Huckabee would compete for Oklahoma and Missouri, both of which are winner-take-all.

McCain's moment is now. If a momentum win doesn't carry him through quickly, money could soon become a huge problem for McCain.

If Super Tuesday ends inconclusively, then there will be another opportunity the following week. But that next round of contests may not be big enough to decide

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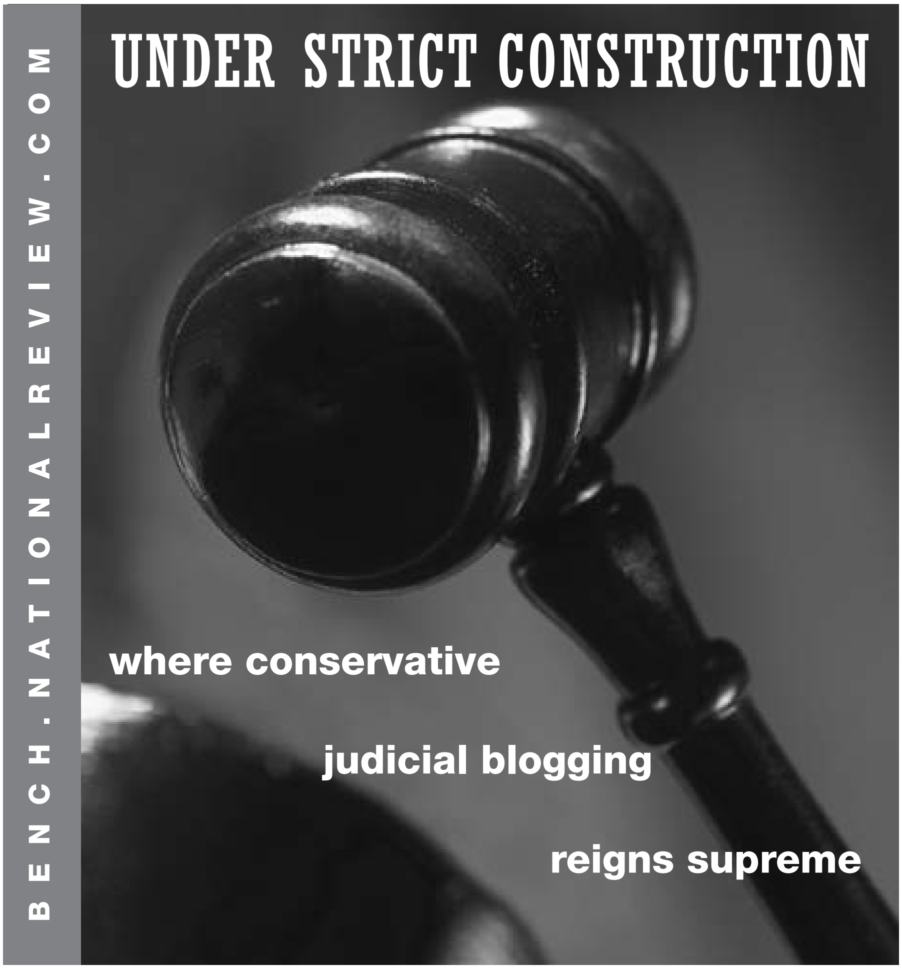
anything, either. First come the February 9 caucuses in Kansas (39). Washington state will also caucus that day, but only half of its 40 delegates will be at stake—the rest are awarded later in a primary. Candidates with resources will probably be more concerned with the following Tuesday's winner-take-all contests in Maryland (37 delegates), Virginia (63), and the District of Columbia (19).

By month's end, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories will have voted. On March 4, Ohio (88), Rhode Island (20), and Vermont (17) get their turn. After that, it will be weeks of emptiness with just a few scattered primaries and state conventions here and there before September.

In other words, the best time to avoid a brokered convention is now. Otherwise, a fractured and momentum-less Republican field could enter a new phase on February 6 with no clear leader. And that would be just like starting all over again. **NR**



■ POLITICS

The Sierra Club Congressman

Will conservatives revolt against Rep. Wayne Gilchrest?

JOHN J. MILLER

On February 26, 1998, Andy Harris spotted a headline in a copy of the *Washington Post* that was sitting in the doctor's lounge of the hospital where he works. "I still remember that it was on the front page of the Metro section, on the right-hand side," he says. Here's what it announced: "Md. Senate Delays Bill on Abortion; Issue Won't Resurface This Year, Officials Say."

The story described how his state senator, a Republican, had played a vital role in killing a proposed ban on partial-birth abortions. "He led the fight against it, which really surprised me," says Harris. "I decided that he couldn't cast a vote like that and not be challenged."

Harris had no political experience beyond his occasional attendance of local Republican-club meetings—the kind of gathering that he says usually drew fewer than a dozen people. Harris nevertheless resolved to take on state senator F. Vernon Boozer, a 17-year incumbent, in the GOP primary—and won a victory that shocked Maryland's Republican establishment.

Now Harris is both aiming higher and trying to repeat history: On February 12, he'll square off in a GOP primary against Rep. Wayne Gilchrest, a liberal Republican who has sat in Congress for as long as Boozer served in the state senate. The contest, which also features state senator E. J. Pipkin, promises to be one of the most expensive in Maryland's history. More important, it could function as a Republican bellwether: Are conservatives so disgruntled following the defeats of 2006 that they'll evict a longtime incumbent whose voting record places him well to the left of his constituents?

Maryland's first congressional district includes all of the state's eastern shore, plus parts of suburban Baltimore. President Bush has carried it easily, winning with 62 percent in 2004. After the 2000 Census, state Democrats gerrymandered the district to contain as many Republicans as possible, with the goal of making other areas more favorable to Democrats. The result is that some of America's most contorted congressional districts lie between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. The aesthetics may be questionable, but the election returns were clear: Maryland's House delegation moved from a four-to-four tie between Democrats and Republicans to a six-to-two lead for Democrats.

Gilchrest, a former Marine who won a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star in Vietnam, has never been an especially good match for his district. He favors abortion rights and gun control, and he even won the endorsement of the Sierra Club for his environmentalism. In its congressional scorecard, the American Conservative Union gives Gilchrest a lifetime rating of 61. Only two of his Republican colleagues

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With my guarantee — it doesn't matter. Go ahead — skip ahead and read the guarantee. I'll wait…

No B.S.

OK — so you see I'm not fooling around here. This is serious business and I won't waste your time or money or ask you to do something dangerous.

Here's a short list of other guys who have used my secret to successfully grow back their hair…

The conductor of a symphony orchestra, 8 homicide detectives, an assistant chief of police, 15 dermatologists, 2 dentists, a district attorney, the head of a county health department, an NFL scout and numerous newspaper, television and radio personalities and many Hollywood celebrities. And there's thousands more. You get the idea.

There's even a United States Patent for this material. I've included a copy in the book.

So here's what this little volume will do for you...

- You will grow your own hair back — starting in about 6 weeks
- Your results are absolutely guaranteed — I take all risk
- No hormones are involved
- No surgery is involved
- No hair weaves
- No toupees
- No wigs
- No sexual side effects
- You will look like a young man again!
- Works equally well for women who have thinning hair

FREE BONUS — "How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover!"

During my comprehensive research on baldness I discovered the latest research results from teams of scientists, physicians and anti-aging specialists who have recently slowed down the aging process.

Specifically — they discovered five nutrients that when taken every day-actually changes your appearance, health and vitality.

Just pop a few special pills and many signs of aging can be halted and reversed. You'll start to look and feel 20 years younger in only 30 days — guaranteed!

You just need to know what these incredible little pills are and where to get them. I spill all the beans and reveal all the secrets of where and how to get these little "magic youth bullets" — without spending an arm and a leg.

I could name drop and tell you about the superstar actor/director in his 70's who's winning Oscars and swears by these nutrients. Or the international diva or the US Senator. But I'm sworn to secrecy. And they paid up to 20 grand a year for these secrets. But not you...

This special FREE bonus report is yours to keep for free — even if you return the "**Black Market**" book for a complete refund as stated in my guarantee.

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PART 1: Use the secret in "**Black Market Baldness Cure?**" for as long as you want. Order the secret ingredient from the list of supply houses I've provided and give it a good test. If you don't agree that you are growing your own hair back, just send the book back anytime. Take a year, five years, ten years. Send it back anytime in your *lifetime* and I'll cheerfully refund every penny of your purchase price! But you get to keep the bonus report, *"How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover".*

PART 2: But here's the really good part of my guarantee: If you do ever send the book back, send me a copy of your receipt for your purchase of the magic hair growth material from the supply house and I'll refund every cent you paid for that too — up to $20.00! You risk absolutely nothing. Fair enough?

Here's how to order…

Risk-Free Trial Offer

☑ OK Mike — I'm going to take advantage of your risk-free trial offer to grow my own hair back and learn how to feel like a teenager again and stop father time in his tracks. I understand that if I'm not satisfied for any reason, I can send the book back anytime in my *lifetime* and get a complete refund of every penny I paid. But I get to keep the FREE bonus report and you'll also refund every penny I paid for the secret hair growth ingredient (up to $20.00) if I send you a copy of the receipt from the supply house. On that basis here's my $39.95 plus $4.95 S&H for a total of **$44.90**.

Please make your check or moneyorder out to **U.S. Health** and mail it to: **US Health, Dept. NR-1, 1153 Malabar Rd. NE #8267, Palm Bay, FL 32907**. You may also send your Visa, Mastercard or American Express number with expiration date. Your book and bonus report will be rushed to your door by first class mail in a discreet brown padded envelope. Thanks — Mike.

P.S. Write the code words "**Dr. Blue**" anywhere on your order and I'll send you a special 2nd FREE bonus report that will stun your sex life into action without even thinking about it. If this big "little" secret doesn't work for you — you're dead! Guys tell me this report is worth more than the other two books combined. And you can keep it even if you send the "**Black Market**" book back if you order today.

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have earned lower marks, and they at least have the excuse of coming from districts won by both Al Gore and John Kerry.

"The debate over liberal versus conservative is bizarre when it comes to competent public policy," says Gilchrest. "I think I'm a liberal like Gorbachev is a liberal—he wanted to bring freedom to his country. I don't follow a mythical, purist ideology."

That's not all he doesn't follow. Last summer, Americans for Tax Reform condemned Gilchrest for twice violating a no-new-taxes pledge he'd signed. The congressman claims not to remember signing the pledge, but ATR keeps a copy on file. "He gets letters from us regularly that remind him that he took the pledge," says Grover Norquist, ATR's president. "I've never heard that excuse before."

Gilchrest also broke his word in November, when he voted to override Bush's veto of a $606 billion domestic-spending bill. Less than five months earlier, he had joined 146 other House Republicans in signing a letter that promised to sustain the president's spending vetoes. "If I signed a letter such as that, it was to be reasonable about it," he says. "I thought the spending increases were a reasonable amount of money." Most House Republicans disagreed, and they just barely managed to keep the bill from becoming law.

So it's easy to understand conservative frustration with Gilchrest. For Harris, an anesthesiologist at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a commander in the Naval Reserve Medical Corps, the breaking point came last spring, when the congressman opposed the troop surge in Iraq. "That issue is just too important to our national security," says Harris. "I looked around and saw that nobody was getting ready to challenge Gilchrest, so I decided to step forward." He declared his candidacy in June.

Since then, conservatives have rallied around Harris, a Brooklyn-born son of immigrants from Ukraine and Hungary. "They hated Communism," he says of his parents. "The only newspaper my father read regularly was *Human Events*, and he read it cover to cover." National Right to Life, Eagle Forum, and the *Washington Times* editorial page have endorsed Harris, and so have two-time gubernatorial candidate Ellen Sauerbrey and 18 current members of the Maryland legislature. His most prominent backer is former governor Bob Ehrlich, who once served with Gilchrest in the House.

"We need Andy in Congress, given where we are as a party in this state and at this time," says Ehrlich. "We need someone who wants to build the party in Maryland. Wayne has shown no interest in doing that and Andy has." Conservatives frequently point to Gilchrest's flame-throwing interview with Reason.com last May, in which he tried to explain the Republican woes of 2006 and beyond: "I think the GOP *was* dissolving. *Now* it's drying up and the wind's going to blow it away. I just don't think we have the depth of knowledge, intellect, and experience necessary for a viable political party anymore."

TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL

Andy Harris

This isn't the first time Gilchrest has faced an opponent in a GOP primary. In 2002 and 2004, he beat back conservative challengers without much difficulty. Harris, however, is by far his most significant threat to date: Harris's campaign expects to spend more than $1 million on the race. Gilchrest allows that Harris may outspend him, but says, "We'll have a sufficient amount of money." Last year he agreed to accept donations from political-action committees, which he had made a point of not doing in previous elections.

He'll need every penny. The Club for Growth, a free-market group that concentrates on GOP primaries, has already spent $340,000 on anti-Gilchrest ads and is almost certain to commit more money to the race as February 12 approaches. "My mother said that if I didn't have anything nice to say about somebody, then don't say anything at all," Gilchrest says of the Club for Growth. He pauses, but can't resist: "They're destroying the Republican Party. They're weakening and degrading it."

The Club for Growth has a history of boosting underdogs. Most famously, it backed the 2004 effort by Pennsylvania congressman Pat Toomey to unseat GOP senator Arlen Specter—a near miss. Then, in 2006, it had its first unqualified success against an incumbent when it helped conservative Tim Walberg swipe the GOP nomination from liberal-leaning Michigan congressman Joe Schwarz. "We're going to do the same thing to Wayne Gilchrest," says Toomey, who now runs the organization. "It's hard to believe how far to the left he's moved."

Unfortunately for Harris, a potential spoiler candidate entered the race in November. Like Harris, E. J. Pipkin is a Republican state senator. In 2004, he ran against Democratic U.S. senator Barbara Mikulski and lost badly. Pipkin is anti-tax, pro-gun, and an Iraq War supporter. Although not a 100 percent pro-lifer, he supports most of the abortion restrictions he might vote on as a congressman. If Harris hadn't jumped in first, it's conceivable that the candidacy of Pipkin, a former Wall Street trader with enough personal wealth to fund his own campaign, could have become a conservative cause. Even so, many Republicans are puzzled by a financial contribution Pipkin once made to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, a Democrat who ran for governor in 2002.

The worry among many conservatives is that because there's no runoff, Harris and Pipkin will divide a large anti-Gilchrest vote and award the congressman a new term that most of the Republicans in his district would prefer to deny him. Yet incumbents don't always survive three-way races: Two years ago, Alaska governor Frank Murkowski, a Republican, finished behind two challengers in a GOP primary. In December, a Club for Growth survey found Harris's support at 26 percent, Gilchrest's at 23 percent, and Pipkin's at 18 percent.

If those numbers hold up, the *Washington Post* will run a front-page article on February 13 and this time Harris won't merely read the story—he'll be the story. **NR**

If hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine were legalized would you be likely to use them?

99% SAY "NO."

Zogby International asked that question of 1,028 likely voters. Ninety-nine out of 100 said "No." Only 0.6 percent said "Yes."[1]

Drug War advocates have always insisted that addiction would explode if drugs were legalized. But that argument comes apart under the weight of the evidence. While a poll can't predict actual drug use, it clearly shows that most of us avoid hard drugs because of common sense – not fear of arrest.

And that's always been the case. At the beginning of the last century when a virtual free market for drugs existed, use rates were lower than they are today.[2] Drug use and addiction – along with crime, violence and corruption – only began to climb after the advent of drug prohibition in 1914.[3]

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1. Zogby America Poll of Likely Voters 10/24/07 thru 10/27/07, "If hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine were legalized, would you be likely to use them?" sponsored by StoptheDrugWar.org, full results and other info online at http://stopthedrugwar.org/legalization. 2. Speaking out against drug legalization, US Drug Enforcement Administration, from the web at http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/demand/speakout/06so.htm and Courtwright, David T., "Dark Paradise: A History of Opiate Addiction in America" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 9; 3. Courtwright, "Dark Paradise," 2001.

■ CULTURE WATCH

A Knave and His Index

Lewis Lapham continues to wound our culture

ROGER KIMBALL

WHAT was Karl Marx's best line? My candidate is his mot, from the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), about history repeating itself first as tragedy, then farce. Consider: It was a minor cultural tragedy when Lewis Lapham trivialized *Harper's* magazine beyond all recognition. Once upon a time, *Harper's* was home to such eminences as Henry James, Winston Churchill, and Mark Twain. Under Lapham's long stewardship, the magazine became a poster child for the dumbed-down limousine leftism that Lapham himself so effulgently personified. The infamous *Harper's* Index, which Lapham introduced in an effort to pander to his readers' diminishing attention spans and confusion of Trivial Pursuit with useful knowledge, epitomized the spirit of the enterprise. Disconnected observations, many of dubious authority, were jumbled together in a pathetic cocktail-game collage:

> Number of pointless "facts" jostled together in the pages of a once-great magazine: 5 billion.
>
> Number of *Harper's* Index items that actually illuminated anyone's experience of the world: Zero.

I did not look into *Harper's* often. I felt about it the way C. K. Dexter Haven, in *The Philadelphia Story*, felt about George Kittredge, Man of the People: that "to hardly know him is to know him well." But I vividly remember "Tentacles of Rage," the 8,000-word fulmination Lapham wrote for the September 2004 issue. Most documents denominated "screeds" do not really live up to the word. "Tentacles of Rage" did so, in spades. Ostensibly an exposé of "The Republican Propaganda Mill," the piece was really a mildly paranoid and disjointed compendium of leftish clichés about conservatives.

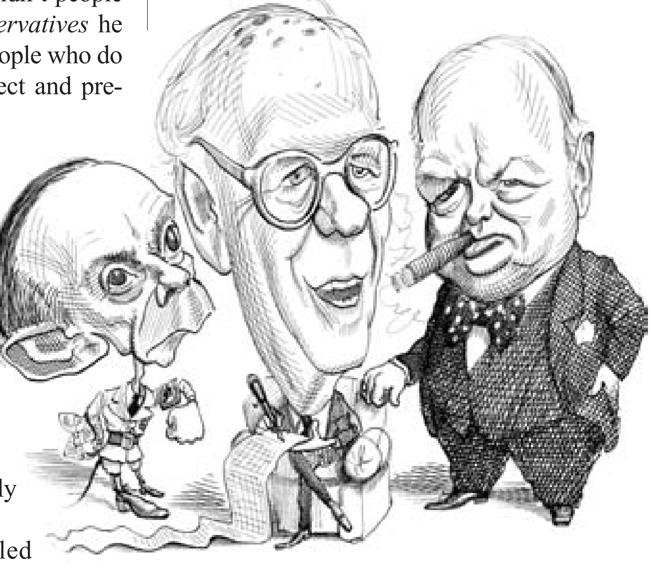
What chiefly distinguished it, however, was not its tone—an amalgam of hysteria and smugness—but its inaccuracy. As I pointed out at the time, "Tentacles of Rage" was littered with falsehoods, including falsehoods about the founding of *The New Criterion*. What made the piece notorious—and confirmed the widespread opinion that Lapham was a knave as well as a fool—was its "report" on the Republican National Convention. Lapham included an eyewitness description of the event, replete with withering comments on the crappy, ideologically motivated speeches given by Republicans. Unfortunately, no sooner had that issue of *Harper's* hit readers' mailboxes than some public-spirited citizen pointed out that Lapham had been reporting on an event that took place *after* that issue of *Harper's* had been mailed. In other words, he just made it up.

"Oh, but I just reported the kinds of things that Republicans always say": That, in essence, was Lapham's uncomprehending response. He just didn't get it. Why all the fuss? Who cares if a journalist deliberately scrambles facts, invents unflattering scenarios, and puts words in the mouths of politicians he doesn't like? Didn't people realize that these were *conservatives* he was talking about—that is, people who do not *deserve* elementary respect and presumption of good will?

Recollecting this affair leads me from the tragedy of *Harper's* to the farce of *Lapham's Quarterly*, volume one, number one of which rolled off the press in November. The great irony, given Lapham's cavalier disregard of historical facts, is that he should embark in his twilight years on a new magazine ostensibly dedicated to history.

The inaugural issue, titled "States of War," is *Harper's* Index on steroids. Lapham contributes a 3,500-word "Preamble"; there are a few original essays ("Further Remarks") at the back of the book; but most of the magazine's 274 pages form a promiscuous literary congeries—two or three pages from Edward Gibbon, Lenin, George S. Patton, and 50-odd others. Most pieces include a boxed quotation or two from another writer: The bit from Tacitus includes a quotation from Shelley, a speech from Tecumseh includes a quotation from Genghis Khan. Sprinkled throughout are various tables, charts, and compilations conveying some miscellaneous bits of random information. On page 131, for example, we read about a "U.S. serviceman's chances of death in battle" from the Revolutionary War (1 in 50) to the Persian Gulf War (1 in 3,162), while page 103 is given over to a chart listing statistics of death and mayhem in the three "Rambo" movies (e.g., "Number of bad guys killed by Rambo with his shirt on," ditto for a shirtless Rambo). T. S. Eliot spoke about shoring fragments against his ruin; Lapham just beaches the lot with no apparent end in view.

Lapham's Quarterly is a curious mental ("intellectual" isn't quite the right word) artifact. Physically, the magazine is a moderately lavish affair, sumptuously printed, full of color reproductions, bedizened with arty layout and typography. But its contents are . . . well, it is difficult to say. In his novel *The Glass Bead Game*, Hermann Hesse described a quasi-mystical game of the future that was "a mode of playing with the total contents and values of our



Lapham and his 'contributors'

ROMAN GENN

Mr. Kimball is co-editor and co-publisher of *The New Criterion*, and publisher of Encounter Books.

Does St. Bozo's Parish No Longer Amuse You?

In many Catholic parishes today, the sense of the sacred — of mystery and majesty and even of worship itself — has largely been banished. The bells, incense, votive candles, and Communion rail are gone. The Tabernacle with the reserved Sacrament can't be found. Elegant statues of our friends, the saints, are locked in the basement, replaced by balloons, banners with greeting-card sentiments, and other dime-store decorations. The organ gathers cobwebs. The sanctuary has become a stage. And the kneelers are now being ripped out, the crucifix taken down.

It's virtually impossible to pray before (or after) Mass because of all the chatter and backslapping. The Creed is left unsaid. Homilists pander with (unfunny) jokes and (not quite the latest) pop-psychology blather. The words of the liturgy are improvised upon by politically correct clerics and lectors with weird agendas — God our Father becomes "God our Parent," the Son of God becomes the "Child of God," etc. And we must clap, clap, clap for the band and the liturgical dancers and the clowns — we aren't making a joyful noise unto the Lord, but only unto the (amateurish) entertainers.

The primary purpose of the Mass has been transformed from receiving Christ and worshiping the Almighty into "celebrating community" — i.e., celebrating our wonderful selves. One influential liturgical "expert" has said the Mass shouldn't convey "a feeling of infinity or eternity or the world beyond," for it's really about "communal sensitivity" among parishioners. But this touchie-feelie Catholicism — where the Sign of Peace becomes the high point of the Mass — has no power or magnetism. Normal people seldom get out of bed on Sunday morning in search of warm huggies.

Catholics who are alienated by trivialized or freakish Masses — who are sick of being guinea pigs in a liturgical lab — often jump ship for an Evangelical church, or just stay in bed. Indeed, Mass attendance among Catholics has dropped from 70%, just before the liturgical experiments began, to 25% today! And today, two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist — which isn't surprising, given that *how* we worship has a profound effect on *what* we believe about the meaning of the Mass.

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culture; it plays with them as, say, in the great age of the arts a painter might have played with the colors on his palette. . . . The game could, for instance, start with a given astronomical configuration, or with the theme of a fugue by Bach, or with a sentence from Leibniz or the Upanishads." *Lapham's Quarterly* is a little like that, but Hesse's image fails to convey the skin-crawling nausea the magazine induces.

The main cause of this disease is unremitting pretentiousness. The *consistency* of the effect is remarkable. It begins with the list of "supporting institutions," which includes the MacArthur Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation: the place that every year anoints another crop of "geniuses," and Paul Newman—what a combination! Who else but Lewis Lapham would have offered readers an "among the contributors" page that juxtaposed (among many others) Winston Churchill, Joseph Goebbels, and Private First Class Jessica Lynch? Who but he would say of St. Augustine (another "contributor") that he "formulated his notion of Christian morality as a response to his having been sorely tempted by a peach"? We are meant to admire the allusion to Augustine's *Confessions* but overlook, or perhaps even savor, the mockery of the description.

But smug pretension is only one arrow in Lapham's quiver. There is also the missile of political correctness. Where do you suppose *Lapham's Quarterly* comes down on the war in Iraq? On the prospects for American society? On George W. Bush? To ask the questions is to answer them. The novelist Caleb Carr, whose "Storm Warning" concludes the issue, says the Bush administration has made a mess of . . . everything. A new Dark Ages may be just around the corner: The United States is Rome, "generalized environmental catastrophe" may well be nigh, "international catastrophes of every stripe . . . are bearing down on us." The sky is falling!

But in many ways Carr's effusion is just an afterthought, a coda that reinforces but does not define the main thrust of *Lapham's Quarterly*. That distinction belongs to Lapham himself. His mastery of the non sequitur and command of the startling half-truth and tendentious declaration have long been admired by connoisseurs of logical deficit and rhetorical incontinence. It adds greatly to the effect of vertiginous exasperation I mentioned above. "The history of Western Civilization," writes Lapham, "bills itself as the romance of war." Er, no it doesn't. But resistance is difficult. Lapham's prose is a logorrheic swamp. The sucking sounds you hear as you wade through it are the little semantic collisions with which Lapham has strewn the reader's pathless journey. What do you make of this gem: "When I complicate the proceedings with a superimposition of marginalia reaching across a distance of fifty years and written while traveling in cities as unlike one another as Chicago and Havana, I can begin to guess at what the physicists have in mind when they talk about the continuum of space and time"? Or how about these two sentences, from near the end of the piece?

> Consistent with the story lines of the twentieth century's wars to end all wars, the conclusions drawn by Keegan and by Mueller suggest that President Bush's splendid little war in Iraq is the work of a man imprisoned in an obsolete tense. His adjutants [for Lapham, the president has no aides, only "adjutants": I suspect he thinks it sounds more sinister] apparently find it hard to say anything in his presence that doesn't go well with the sound of bugles, and in the speeches staged against a backdrop of flags and high-ranking uniforms, he presents himself as a military commander in the romantic tradition of General George Patton (page 24), captivated by the song of the sword that Oliver Wendell Holmes brought to the students at Harvard University in 1895 (page 30), content with the blessing of Saint Augustine (page 36).

Put simply, there's no there there. What makes this emetic production more than a passing irritation is the fact that it poaches on the authority of historical truth only to trivialize and besmirch it. Lapham is certainly right that our culture's addiction to the present, to the ephemeral, bequeaths us an intellectual poverty that is a recipe for moral and political folly. But by swaddling that important commonplace with his baroque, politically tendentious verbiage, Lapham makes it vastly more difficult to acknowledge, let alone address, the disaster of historical nescience. *Lapham's Quarterly* is not so much a response to as a symptom of the cultural cataclysm it pretends to diagnose. **NR**

■ FRANCE

Nicolas & Carla & Bill & Hillary

Ménages old and new

ROB LONG

ONCE, a few years ago, I was sitting outdoors at La Palette, a Paris café on rue de Seine. I was there with a French friend of mine, and it was one of those sunny, chilly Paris afternoons designed for sitting outside with a cigarette and a glass of wine, engaging in moody and intermittent conversation.

A guy sat down next to us who was dressed, even by French standards, in an absurd getup: on his feet, a pair of lime green canvas sneakers; on his body, a clingy white T-shirt and a pair of tiny, thigh-squeezing shorts; and around his neck, a thick wool scarf, wrapped to resemble an enormous blue bagel.

I gathered up all of the various verb tenses, noun phrases, and polite icebreakers I'd had rattling around in my head since freshman year, ignored the silent protests of my Parisian friend, turned to the crazy man, and asked, as elegantly as I could, *Buddy, what's up with the outfit?*

Like the best of his countrymen, he was pleased to be able to explain his particular eccentricity. *You see*, he said, pointing to what we'll call, for the purposes of this discussion, his lap, *I am always hot down there*. And then, pointing to his head, *But I am also always cold up here*. "Je suis comme ça, moi," he added.

France: hot down there, cold up here. Which brings us to this: The president of France has a girlfriend.

Correction: a *hot* girlfriend. But for once, that's all he's got—there's no stoic, soigné wife around to keep things adult and restrained. When the dashing, unpredictable, master-of-the-scarf Nicolas Sarkozy and his second wife, Cécilia, finally got around to getting a divorce last

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year, he took up pretty immediately with Carla Bruni, a fashion model turned singer-songwriter, whose smoky voice and sad-rueful songs can be easily downloaded on iTunes, or via her Facebook or MySpace pages. Which is, you know, kind of cool. Put it this way: Mme. Chirac, Carla Bruni's stately predecessor in the Elysée Palace, had a closetful of Chanel but she was not on MySpace.

This is all pretty new stuff for France, which since the earliest of the Louis has prided itself on its restrained sexiness, a cosmopolitan blend of southern Latin passion (the *hot down there*) and chilly northern reserve (the *cold up here*).

Nicolas Sarkozy took office promising dynamic changes, not just to official French policy—an unabashed Americaphile, he famously spent his summer holiday lakeside in New Hampshire, has spoken robustly about meeting the threat of a nuclear Iran, proudly wears an NYPD T-shirt, wants to abolish the 35-hour work week—but also to French culture. Less than a full year into his term, he is already the most accessible, transparent French politician in history. He's railed against the "hypocrisy and lies" of the French political and media establishment, in its treatment both of the personal lives of its members and of their financial shenanigans. The French press has dubbed him, with disapproval, the *hyperprésident*, both for his voracious appetite for publicity and for his naked power grabs. He has concentrated policymaking among a few key advisers—often bypassing his own ministers—and has attempted, successfully, to marginalize the hapless prime minister, François Fillon. He's even proposed amending the French constitution to allow him to address parliament.

Plus, he's got a hot girlfriend.

The kind of presidency that Sarkozy envisions for himself is pretty close to the kind of presidency we have in the United States: both highly centralized—does anyone really think the secretary of education sets education policy?—and hugely public. The successful American president wheels, deals, and leads through a Sarkozian combination of PR, retail politics, personality, and arm-twisting. Like it or not, it's *all* political. The modern American president cannot afford the careful compartmentalization of a François Mitterrand, who kept his mistress and their daughter tucked away, or even a U.S. president as recent as John F. Kennedy. It's all one big frothy soup, as our most recent *hyperprésident*, Bill Clinton, found out.

Nicolas Sarkozy, in fact, is the kind of president that Bill Clinton would have been had it not been for, you know, *her*. Hillary Clinton, and their tangled, fraught, tense marriage, kept him in a constant state of dishonesty, sneaking around to furtive, creepy Oval Office encounters that were astonishing mostly because they were so tacky.

The hyperprésident *and his hot girlfriend*

KCS/SPLASH

Sarkozy, on the other hand, has been positively Oprah-esque in his openness. He announced his relationship at a press conference, without apology. He and Bruni have vacationed together—*Paris Match*, the French weekly, published romantic photos of the couple in Egypt, arm in arm, scarf to scarf—and he has blithely talked of marriage. The French press—and perhaps the French public, too—have reacted to all of this with baffled concern. The elegant discretion of the French political establishment has been utterly cracked, replaced by a wide-open MySpace presidency. The story of the day is Sarkozy and his hot girlfriend; not, for instance, the November riots in the suburbs.

A little *hot down there* isn't such a bad thing, even here. In the Nevada caucuses, it was Bill Clinton who swanned through the casino caucus sites, charming the (mostly) Hispanic employees, pressing the flesh, dazzling the crowd with his rock-star glamour. All along, the Clinton political brain trust was worried about those at-large caucus venues—Obama, after all, had won the endorsement of the important casino-worker labor unions, and he was expected to run the table. In the end, though, most of them went for Hillary. What won the day was Clinton magic: his, not hers. Hillary is strictly the *cold up here*.

Which could turn out to be a problem. The French have a phrase, the *cinq à sept* (the *five to seven*), which describes the hours when a man is neither at work nor at home with his wife. Just as Sarkozy is dragging France into the age of openness, the Clintons seem to be pulling America back to the era of *cinq à sept*. We're supposed to ignore, if we can, the weirdness of their marriage, the odd living arrangements, the unresolved issues of their relationship. We're supposed to conflate it all into two words—"Monica" and "Lewinsky"—as if all of that were a one-time thing, a blip in an otherwise loving, devoted marriage. We're supposed to focus on the *cold up here* and ignore the raging *hot down there* of the entire Clinton opera. To do otherwise would be rude and unsophisticated. But discretion is a two-way street. Living the *cinq à sept* life means that when the clock strikes *sept*, you head home. The Clintons, with their noisy, sloppy marriage spilling out around the clock—the furious fights, the Oval Office pawing—never bothered to keep their side of the bargain. Are we really ready for four more years of that? Have we forgotten how exhausting it is to pretend not to notice what we're all noticing? And if we've forgotten, shouldn't, say, Barack Obama be reminding us?

Sarkozy's high-wire act may end up transforming France—for better or worse—into a looser, less hidebound place. His new kind of celebrity presidency, though, could easily backfire—in not too long, he faces tough local elections, which could set his party back and be viewed, justifiably, as a referendum on his personal, transparent style. France may not be ready to toss away its sense of decorum and propriety.

On the other hand, he's got a hot girlfriend. Which is more than Bill Clinton can say. **NR**

■ **COVER STORY**

The Obama Appeal

He's post-racist, but also post-American

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

As Republicans watched the recent Democratic debates, the mountainous scale of the problems they face glowered down on them. They were already intimidated by the steepness of the first peak—Mount Change. A mid-January Gallup poll showed that only 17 percent of Americans want to continue with President George W. Bush's policies against a staggering 79 percent who want to change them. All the candidates support "change," of course, but the voters seem to interpret the word in a strongly anti-Republican sense.

The problem only gets worse when they are asked to break down this general desire into support for specific policies. The first four they want to see are: end the war in Iraq/bring the troops home, 26 percent; health-care reform, 19 percent; fix the economy/create more jobs, 18 percent; and secure the borders/address illegal immigration, 10 percent. Three of these four top issues are natural Democratic ones, at least in the closing stages of a GOP administration. The Republican frontrunner would prefer to see the sole Republican issue, immigration, buried because he takes a Democratic view of it. Taxes and fiscal discipline—a couple of natural GOP issues—lag behind, at 7 and 5 percent respectively.

It would be an uphill climb for GOP hopefuls even if they did not have these lead weights strapped to their ankles—because the Democrats, in addition to looking like experienced climbers, seem to be enjoying the exercise. In the South Carolina debate, even former senator John Edwards put on a good show. His schtick as a blow-dried Lear raging against the elemental facts of American middle-class prosperity has worn as thin as a five-and-dime winter coat, and his angry populism lacks the saving grace of humor that Mike Huckabee brings to the same themes; but if he going—and he is—he intends to go in full ranting mode.

Sen. Hillary Clinton has reestablished herself as the frontrunner. She has done so by the skin of her teeth, and her new status may not survive the South Carolina result; but in recovering, she has shown an unexpected ability to vary her personal style without losing any of her underlying steely resolve. Her "crying game"—whether calculated or a momentary weakness—was extraordinarily successful. It made her less monotonous and more unpredictable. At the same time, she seemed the least vulnerable contender in the debates, displaying the cold sneer of command at some points and a dry wit ("well, that hurts my feelings") at others.

If nominated, she would be a strong opponent, enjoying more or less united Democratic support and media sympathy. But she remains divisive, polarizing, unappealing to independents, and thus the best Democrat the Republicans have got. That is not saying much, however, when all Democrats have an advantage over all Republicans.

CHARM OFFENSIVE

Sen. Barack Obama would plainly be a much stronger candidate in the general election, even if he is at a slight disadvantage in the primaries. In part this is the result of his personality: He is simply likeable. But this likeability goes very deep. He has a kind of cool grace in almost all situations that indicates an underlying self-control remarkable in a relative novice.

This self-control has slipped only once in the campaign, when he responded to Hillary's remarks on her own unlikeability with the line, "You're likeable enough, Hillary." The retort itself was a blunder. It cost him dearly with women voters who felt it to be an unchivalrous putdown. (They had clearly not heard that chivalry is a patriarchal control mechanism.) It may even have sparked a late wave of feminism that still hurts him. But—like other jabs that Obama has delivered in the debates—it indicated an underlying steeliness that is the equal of Hillary's but better concealed.

This blend of charm, grace, and steeliness also influences Obama's ethnic image. One might raid the store of (I trust) inoffensive ethnic stereotypes to describe Obama's personality as a combination of black charm and Swiss efficiency. That in no way intends to suggest that he is running away from an ethnic identity as a black man. Quite the contrary: In his autobiographical works, he embraces such an identity very warmly when he could have presented himself as of "mixed" race. But he is not running as a representative black candidate in the resentful mode of Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton.

When Obama deals with issues of particular concern to blacks, he stresses their social-justice aspects rather than their specifically racial components. And when he discusses identity issues, he does so as someone advocating an America united on the basis of fairness rather than a racial spoils system. There are illusions and deceptions built into this approach, as we shall see, but his rhetoric and appeal reflect a political identity that rises above race and ethnicity. He is the candidate of a post-racist America.

His electoral support reflects this post-racist appeal. In both New Hampshire and Iowa, he won votes disproportionately from higher-educated voters, young voters, wealthier Democrats, first-time voters, independents, and crossover moderate Republicans. Hillary held on to most of the Democratic base among poorer, less educated, and more partisan Democrats. When all Americans are asked—Gallup again—whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about whether Hillary, Obama, McCain, and Huckabee would bring about real change, Obama scores highest among all Americans as the candidate most likely to effect change. Among Democrats alone, Hillary wins this contest by a large margin. Significantly, both Obama and McCain score well in general because they both have a strong appeal to the other party.

Until recently, Obama's post-racist coalition was both socially upscale and somewhat short on black voters. It included minority professionals who see a black president as a catalyst to remove the few remaining race barriers in the U.S. But the split between strong and marginal Democrats meant that most black voters stayed firmly in Hillary's column.

That is now changing, under three pressures. First, black Democrats who have known and supported Hillary for many years are only now becoming aware of Obama. As they do, some drift into his camp. Second, more blacks are beginning to believe that Obama could actually win the election. And, finally, the Clintons have got entangled in the politics of sensitivity in which they have trapped so many others.

There have been several racially tinged rows of late: whether Hillary cheated Martin Luther King by giving some of the credit for civil-rights reform to LBJ; the reminder by Clinton allies that Obama had used drugs; etc. These have persuaded some black voters that the Clinton campaign is dissing Obama and using racial stereotypes to do so. Both campaigns looked into the abyss of a race row in the Democratic party—and drew prudently back from the brink. But all these factors have, for the moment, pushed black voters of all economic levels toward Obama, widened the social basis of his support, and increased his chances of winning.

NOVEMBER AND BEYOND

How significant would such a victory be? Some commentators after Iowa interpreted the Obama "insurgency" as a final revolutionary push toward a non-racist America. In fact, Obama's success is evidence that such an America was achieved some time ago. Most Americans have long wanted to vote for a black candidate to demonstrate their own lack of prejudice—to themselves as much as to others. If Colin Powell had run for the presidency in 1996, he would probably have defeated Bill Clinton. Twelve years later, an Obama victory would be the celebration of a successful revolution for racial equality rather than the moment when the battle turned.

This sense of "change" already achieved explains why veteran black activists like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton have been so nervous about the Obama campaign: A black man in the White House would undermine the politics of white guilt/black exploitation that has long been their stock in trade. It also helps explain why Obama's campaign has such a joyful, relaxed, and oddly uncontroversial "feel" to it. On the morrow of Iowa, it seemed almost an apolitical celebration; though the New Hampshire defeat later cooled the celebration, it did not alter its nonpartisan quality of complacent moral self-congratulation. It is not a very bold prediction to say that if Obama gets his party's nomination, the post-Iowa mood that America had a moral responsibility to elect Obama will be restored on steroids.

Two main obstacles, however, stand between him and the nomination. The first is the gender gap. Hillary scored well among women long before New Hampshire. Last year Gallup showed that she had a strong favorability rating not only among Democratic women but also among independent women. In New Hampshire she defeated Obama by 46 to 34 percent. Polls since then show her retaining a strong lead over Obama even among black women.

Hillary has been a strong, partisan defender of feminist positions for many years; she is now reaping the reward for that. But the apparent last-minute swing of women voters into her column suggests something else at work too: a collective *amour-propre*. Many women felt that the first woman to be a serious presidential candidate was being unfairly dismissed from consideration before a single primary had been held by a cast of establishment characters that included Obama himself ("You're likeable enough, Hillary"). That sharpened the sexual resentments and loyalties of women beyond the ranks of feminism that secured her victory. Such feelings will inevitably fade in time; they may be offset among black women by racial resentments aroused by the King brouhaha; for the moment, however, they persist and complicate Obama's electoral calculations.

The second obstacle is the growing divide between blacks and Hispanics in U.S. politics. By and large this has developed without the mass media's noticing, because the press has a liberal vision of all minorities cooperating harmoniously under a Rainbow Umbrella. But it emerged unmistakably in the Nevada caucuses, when Hillary won big among Hispanics and Obama among blacks; and the polls show a similar divergence nationwide and in primaries such as Florida's. It arises directly from the growth of the Hispanic community, which is itself driven largely by immigration.

Obama's success is evidence that a non-racist America was achieved some time ago.

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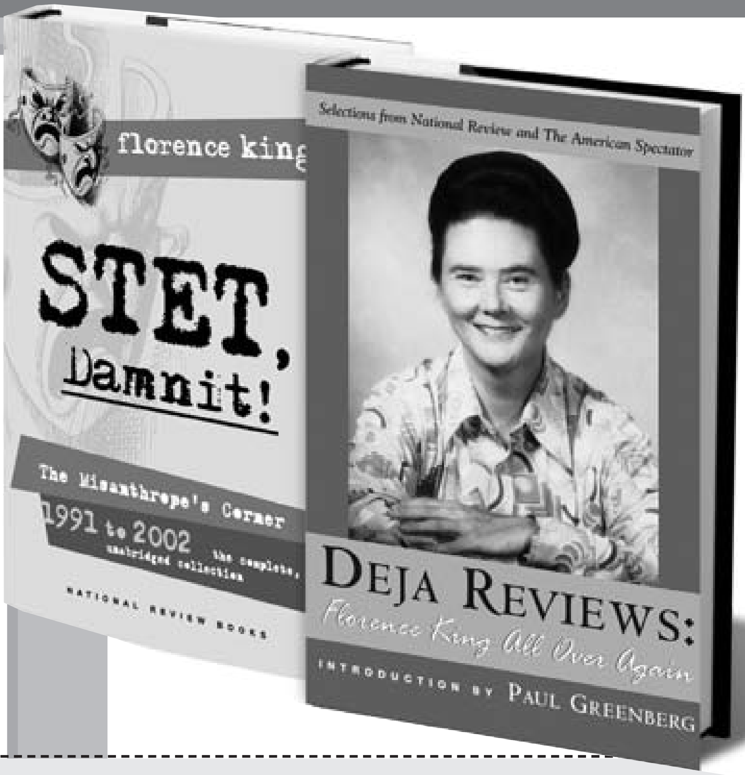
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As Steven Malanga demonstrates in the current *City Journal*, this has resulted in a loss of economic opportunities and political power among black Americans—and in their substantial internal migration. In Los Angeles, the black population fell by 123,000 in the last 15 years, while the Hispanic one rose by more than 450,000. Whole areas of the cities have changed their ethnic character. The employment rate of unskilled black males has declined considerably as a result. And immigration policy is becoming the focus of disagreement between the two communities.

This creates some difficulty for a Democratic coalition that contains both. As it happens, Hillary and Obama are united in supporting a comprehensive immigration reform that would include amnesty for the illegal workers already here. Both campaigns will seek to reduce controversy over the issue now and until November. Hillary in particular is conscious that if she is the Democratic nominee, and if John McCain is *not* the GOP's nominee, then the Republicans could split the Democrats and detach a larger-than-usual segment of the black vote by campaigning to reduce immigration levels. Obama has meanwhile played his part by urging in a church sermon that black Christians have a duty to welcome immigrants. But both are uncomfortably aware that the Hispanic-black split over immigration is an issue that at any moment could go critical—and deny one of them the prize.

Obama's strategic difficulties largely dissolve, however, once he wins the nomination. All the women's groups, led by Hillary, would support him against any conceivable Republican. No substantial number of black Americans, however concerned about immigration, would pass up the chance to elect the first black president. Ditto most liberal Democrats. And almost all Obama's other recent actions have strengthened his appeal to independents and crossover Republicans. His recent praise for Reagan wrong-footed his opponents, strengthened his crossover appeal, widened his ideological options, and confirmed *his* public image of cool graciousness. Not a bad return on saying what almost everyone, including Hillary and Bill, knew to be an admirable platitude.

More important even than that is his recent rhetoric on American unity. Obama has mastered the lost art of delivering patriotic speeches that sound sincere and sensible. Such rhetoric used to be a Republican specialty, but liberal opinion long ago bullied them out of it ("super-patriotism"), and now they have lost the knack. The American people retain a taste for patriotic unity, however, and will likely respond to it with added respect when it comes from a post-racist black American.

But there are two kinds of American unity: the natural unity of citizens with equal rights, and the managed unity of groups with equal rights. These are in direct conflict with each other. Obama's rhetoric is undoubtedly sincere, but it gives the impression that he favors the first sort of unity when he actually wants to ratify and advance the second. A glimpse at his speeches and programs demonstrates that he is committed, like all the Democratic candidates, to such policies as racial preferences, multiculturalism, liberal immigration laws, and the transfer of power from America's constitutional republic to non-accountable global bodies and international law. For Obama is not merely a post-racist; he is a post-nationalist and a post-American too. But will the eventual Republican nominee be able to explain the difference? **NR**

■ **2008 III**

How to Fight A Huck

Don't revile his supporters

RAMESH PONNURU

More nonsense has been said and written about former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee than about any other presidential candidate. Some of his critics have accused him of being a "Dominionist"—someone who wants the government strictly to enforce all Biblical commands—because he has said that same-sex marriage contradicts "God's standards." One infelicitous comment, even repeated, hardly means that Huckabee is itching to stone adulterers. Yet even some conservatives rushed to compare him to the Taliban.

After Huckabee won the Iowa caucuses, it was widely said that the "Republican establishment" was panicked over it. Many commentators have said that his rise, and that of Sen. John McCain, shows that movement conservatism is dying, since so many movement conservatives dislike them. Does anyone remember 1996? The candidate who came closest to being a movement favorite, Phil Gramm, didn't make it to New Hampshire, while the candidates the movement liked least, Bob Dole and Patrick Buchanan, got the most primary votes. There are reasons to worry about the future of conservatism, but the fact that Republican primary voters sometimes disagree with the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* or of this magazine is not among them.

A SPLINTER MOVEMENT

It is true that the party establishment thinks Huckabee would lose badly in November. But it doesn't believe that he will be nominated, and thus is not panicked at the prospect. It has seen candidates it regards as unelectable win primaries before. Buchanan, for example, narrowly beat Dole in New Hampshire, and Dole was both the establishment's candidate and the frontrunner. Huckabee's victories have been comparatively trifling.

Huckabee's candidacy has less potential than Buchanan's did. Buchanan ran as a strong social conservative who disagreed with most Republicans on trade, taxes, and entitlements. He promised to rally the party's "peasants with pitchforks" against its "barons." The exit polls showed that his social conservatism was the basis of his support. His heterodoxies on economics repelled more primary voters than they attracted.

Huckabee's campaign has even less promise, because its appeal is limited to a subset of social conservatives: those who are also evangelical and born-again Protestants. His supporters get indignant when people make this point. They say that his critics and the press have pounced on his most innocuous gestures to scare non-evangelicals away from him. If President Clinton could refer to

Christmas as the anniversary of "the birth of Christ," they say, Huckabee should have been able to do the same thing in a campaign ad.

There have been a few too many such incidents for it to be plausible that Huckabee is simply the naïve victim of his opponents. It seems pretty clear that he has consciously tried to get evangelicals to vote for him on the basis of their shared religious views. But even if he had no such intention, the way he has campaigned—along with the predictable response to the way he has campaigned—has guaranteed that he will appeal much more to evangelicals than to other voters. Even if his opponents are at fault for characterizing him as the candidate of evangelical identity politics, in other words, he has made it easy for them to do so.

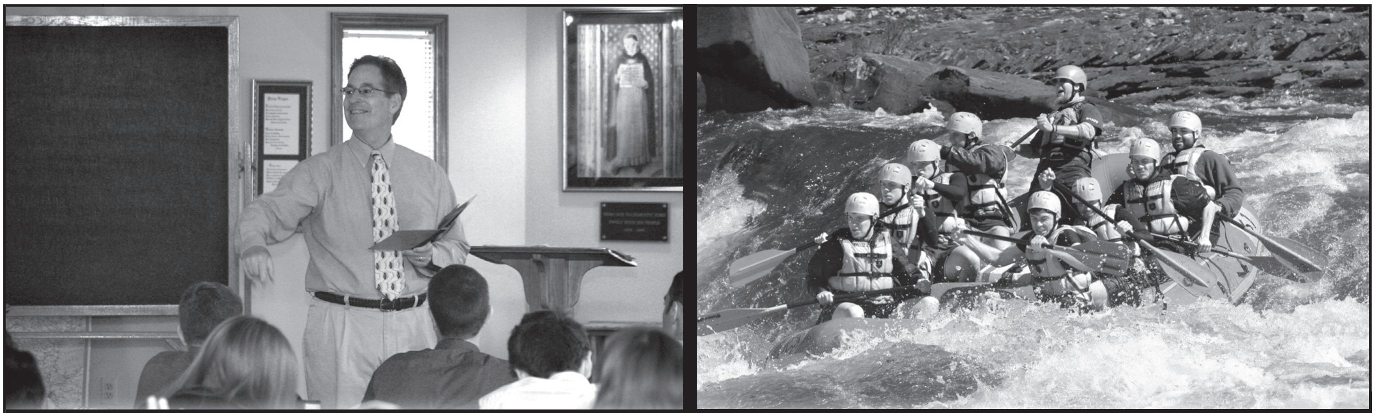
Huckabee has participated in four contests so far: Iowa, New Hampshire, Michigan, and South Carolina. The entrance and exit polls allow us to identify five trends in his vote. (The pollsters group together voters who identify themselves as "evangelical or born-again Christians." But for convenience, and meaning no offense, I'm going to use the word "evangelical" for both.)

First: While he has never gotten a majority of evangelical voters, he has consistently done well among them. In Iowa and South Carolina, he won a strong plurality among those voters, which allowed him to place, respectively, first and second.

Second: Huckabee has consistently done more than three times better among evangelical voters than among other voters. Third: As you might expect given those first two points, Huckabee has consistently performed poorly among non-evangelical voters. He has never placed higher than fourth, or broken 15 percent, among them. Fourth: It follows that the bulk of his support has come from evangelical Christians. In Michigan, where evangelicals were 39 percent of Republican-primary voters, they were 70 percent of Huckabee's voters. (That last figure is my calculation based on the exit polls.)

Fifth: The larger the evangelical presence in a state, the better Huckabee does among non-evangelicals. He had single-digit support among the non-evangelicals of Michigan and New Hampshire, where evangelicals were a minority of the voters. He got 14 percent of non-evangelicals in Iowa and South Carolina, where evangelicals were 60 percent of the electorate. My interpretation: Non-evangelicals are more likely to vote for Huckabee when they have neighbors who back him.

Strong support from evangelical conservatives made Huckabee a factor in the race. The point may seem obvious, especially now that I have buried you in exit polls, but it runs counter to a line of commentary about the race. David Brooks has been the most influential analyst to claim that Huckabee has done as well as he has by appealing to low-income voters, and to urge Republicans to try to follow his lead. Other commentators (including me) have pointed out that younger evangelicals are more likely than their elders to support federal action against



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global warming or poverty, and that Huckabee's anti-corporate rhetoric follows this current.

Brooks is right to advise Republicans to court low-income voters, but Huckabee has hardly shown them how to do it. He has not been a font of policy ideas to help them; and while the data available do not settle the issue, it appears that he appeals only to those low-income voters who also share his religion.

Huckabee's heterodoxies have earned him fantastic press, especially given his opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage. But they do not seem to have increased his vote totals. Perhaps that is why, over the course of the campaign, he has moved closer to orthodox conservative views. He has backtracked on his support for a national smoking ban and now says that all illegal immigrants should go home.

The Huckabee campaign has faced a series of cruel binds from the start. Forming a sizable evangelical base was probably the only way for him to become a factor in the campaign. But his particularistic appeal also guaranteed that he would not win the nomination. There are enough evangelical Republicans for a candidate to be tempted to adopt a strategy of building out from an evangelical base. But there are not enough of them for it to work. For one thing, many evangelicals will not respond to such an appeal. Some of them will find it insulting. Some of them will harbor disagreements with the candidate and will not subordinate those disagreements to their shared religion. Some of them will decide—correctly—that he cannot win the nomination or the general election. Many of the leaders of evangelical conservative organizations have pointedly refused to support the Huckabee campaign. Huckabee enthusiasts, particularly the young ones, tend to think that these leaders have sold out. The leaders think they are too seasoned to make a young enthusiast's mistake.

But the very fact that a candidacy based on evangelicalism will not win an overwhelming majority of evangelical voters creates another bind. Huckabee may have thought that he could consolidate the evangelical vote and then expand his appeal to other voters. But for the reasons mentioned, he was never going to get past the first stage. At every juncture, it will always seem easier for him to increase his support among evangelicals than to court other voters.

So it probably helped Huckabee when, in December, he began arguing that his campaign was encountering resistance because a lot of Republicans—particularly those in what he called "the Wall Street–to–Washington axis"—were happy to accept evangelical votes but would never accept an evangelical leader. He cast himself, that is, as the victim of anti-evangelical prejudice. Such prejudice surely exists, within as well as outside the Republican party. On balance, however, being an evangelical helps a candidate within the Republican primaries. It helped George W. Bush, and it has helped Huckabee. So Huckabee's comment fails as a serious analysis of the campaign. As a tactic, however, it was bound to increase his support among evangelicals without much increasing it among any other group of voters—and possibly while turning off those other voters.

After Huckabee took second place in South Carolina, most observers expected him to fade. Any campaign that followed the template of the Huckabee campaign could be expected to do so eventually. He will lose states where evangelicals are not strong majorities of the Republican party. Many evangelicals, seeing the result of his failure to appeal to non-evangelicals, will start to think of him as a losing candidate and a wasted vote, and start moving away from him too.

THE FUTURE OF HUCKABISM

Huckabee may not be the last candidate to try this strategy. It is, for one thing, a hopeless strategy only if the goal is to win the Republican nomination. It is a much more promising route to becoming a big shot in national politics. As a result of this campaign, Huckabee is already the most prominent evangelical political figure of his generation.

The upside for Republicans is that campaigns such as Huckabee's can bring new, young activists into the party. The history of such campaigns suggests that activists, as they get seasoned, become more realistic about how to influence politics. A lot of those evangelical leaders who have given the cold shoulder to Huckabee probably have Robertson '88 buttons somewhere in their attics.

The downside is that such campaigns can leave bitterness in their wake. If a lot of Huckabee's evangelical supporters conclude that the party, in rejecting him, is also rejecting them, then the damage will be lasting.

Which makes the performance of so many of Huckabee's opponents all the more appalling. Huckabee was never going to win the nomination. He was, to be sure, a threat to some of the other candidates. Once he took off, he was going to have a lock on the votes of many social conservatives—those who are evangelicals and favor their own—but would remain unable to win. That handicapped candidates who were trying to assemble majority coalitions dominated by social conservatives of all religions—and it helped candidates who were relatively socially liberal.

Since Huckabee was not going to win the nomination, the problem he posed for the party as a whole was one of coalition management. The first rule in such a situation is not to attack the man's supporters: Don't call them country bumpkins. The second is not to attack him in terms that could be (and often are) applied to his supporters: Don't call him a country bumpkin, either. The third is not to attack him in hysterical terms. Some of Huckabee's voters could be persuaded that his ideas on economics and foreign policy were misguided and even dangerous. They were not going to be persuaded that he was a "pro-life liberal" who had hoodwinked them. Too many of Huckabee's opponents, particularly on the Internet, violated all three rules.

A fourth rule, perhaps a corollary of the second, is not to attack him in terms that the Left regularly uses against all conservatives. Most evangelical conservatives do not want a theocracy, but believe that the modern liberal version of the separation of church and state is deeply mistaken. Liberals tend to think any dissent from their preferences in this matter is at least incipiently theocratic. Too many of Huckabee's conservative critics joined them in that confusion. To critique Huckabee's approach to religion and politics was entirely reasonable; to adopt the ideas and even the language of secular liberalism was counterproductive. It hardened evangelicals' support for him.

Next time we will have to do better. For there will be a next time. Evangelicals and others are going to have to live with each other inside the GOP for some years to come—and, now, with Mike Huckabee as well. **NR**

■ AT WAR

Iraq Reborn

What our troops have wrought, and how to preserve it

WESLEY MORGAN

In the final days of 2006, Iraq seemed like a lost cause. The second of two U.S. security crackdowns in Baghdad had failed, with insurgents moving back into "cleared" neighborhoods as soon as thinly stretched U.S. battalions moved on to the next fight. At the same time, the Shiite religious militia Jaish al-Mahdi, whose enemies include both al-Qaeda and the U.S., was steadily moving west across the city, battling al-Qaeda and other Sunni insurgents along the way. Civilian deaths due to the attendant sectarian cleansing reached their highest levels ever. Amid all this, Iranian-built bombs were killing a steeply growing number of soldiers. The prospects of the U.S. military mission in Iraq appeared bleak.

Today, after a momentous year, those trends have been reversed. The U.S. military is prosecuting a sophisticated campaign that bears little resemblance to the struggle it was losing a year ago. We have not won, by any means, but after a troop increase, several aggressive and carefully planned counterinsurgency operations, and a campaign to build tribal support, it seems that we are over the hump. U.S. and Iraqi casualty levels have decreased dramatically; the advance of the Jaish al-Mahdi through Baghdad has stalled; the flow of Iranian bombs has ebbed; and al-Qaeda, while active, is reeling in the wake of blows by U.S. forces and desertions among its former Sunni allies. Security in Iraq remains poor, but as a result of U.S. operations, it is worlds better than it was a year ago.

The reversal of the downward security spiral this past year is largely the result of four interconnected efforts: the "surge" of additional forces into the country; the adoption of classic counterinsurgency tactics, with U.S. battalions spreading out among the population and earning their trust; the grassroots reconciliation of many Sunni and some Shiite communities; and a series of meticulously planned corps-level offensives across Baghdad and its surrounding areas. All of these efforts have hinged on one major change: During 2007, every echelon of the U.S. command—from the four-star headquarters down through the critical corps and division levels to the brigades and battalions in the field—was closely integrated into a cohesive whole. Without this integration, none of the four efforts that have brought Iraq forward would have made much difference.

We all know, from a year of ceaseless media attention, that Gen. David Petraeus is the intellectual heavyweight behind the new military counterinsurgency doctrine, but a number of other changes were needed to make possible that doctrine's success. The first and highest-level of these, of course, was President Bush's announcement shortly before his 2007 State of the Union address that five additional brigades would be "surged" into Iraq. Although it would take six months for the full complement of surge units to be in place, the announcement made clear that the White House and the Pentagon were giving the new commander a blank slate to alter the force and its strategy, operations, and tactics. The importance of this fresh-start mentality should not be underestimated; it not only allowed Petraeus unprecedented freedom of action as he assumed command, but also signaled to Iraqis—friend and foe alike—that, no matter what the polls showed, the United States was deeply committed to Iraq, at least for one more year.

What to do, though, with the surge brigades and this freedom of action? Soon after the president's address, Petraeus and his civilian counterpart, Amb. Ryan Crocker, gathered a team of well-regarded officers, including Cols. H. R. McMaster, Peter Mansoor, and Bill Rapp. This team drew up a campaign plan that incorporated creative counterinsurgency solutions at all levels, with an emphasis on getting fighters out into hostile areas, keeping them there, and following up on their successes. One key innovation was the formation of a "strategic engagement cell" to lead reconciliation efforts with former insurgents. Another was the relentless emphasis on pushing combat units off the large bases from which they had "commuted to combat" in 2006, and onto outposts from which they could secure the population.

The new strategy also included major operational and tactical shifts at every echelon of command. Collectively, these are often called the "Petraeus Doctrine," but the officers below him deserve just as much credit. Indeed, giving lower-level generals and colonels the freedom to innovate was itself one of the most important parts of the doctrine.

A STRATEGY AND ITS TACTICS

In December 2006, Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno arrived in Iraq to take command of Multi-National Corps Iraq (MNC-I), which is responsible for overseeing the war at an operational level—deciding which brigades are sent where, and how the different area commands will interact with each other. As a two-star commander in northern Iraq in 2003, Odierno had been harshly criticized in the press for heavy-handed tactics, and many observers greeted his assumption of the new post with trepidation. In the past year, however, Odierno has proved to be the finest corps commander of the war.

With the assistance of such officers as Cols. James Hickey, Mike Meese, and Marty Wilson, he spent last winter clearly defining the tactical role of MNC-I in planning operations, even as the strategic guidance of MNF-I (Multi-National Force Iraq, which Petraeus commands) was still being developed. The resulting plan called for using the first surge reinforcements to fill gaps in Baghdad, but for the remainder to be committed to the "belts"—the approaches to the city, where much Sunni insurgent activity took place in 2006. In this way, U.S. forces would not just reclaim and hold Baghdad, but would fight the Sunnis aggressively where their attacks originated.

Finally, tactics changed last winter on a large scale, bringing U.S. forces all over the country more in line with classic counterinsurgency doctrine. Here again, while Petraeus understandably gets most of the credit, the changes were the responsibility of a strong

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collection of division commanders—two-star generals who oversee large sub-regions of the country—and brigade commanders. The division commanders—Maj. Gens. Randy Mixon in northern Iraq, Joseph Fil in Baghdad, Walter Gaskin in Anbar, and Rick Lynch south of the capital—have enthusiastically used the blank slate of the surge to rearrange their units, request any reinforcements they might need, and apply greater or lesser amounts of force, diplomacy, and economic aid as needed.

Below them, many—although by no means all—of the 20 brigade commanders have been just as energetic and creative: shifting battalions, using air support in new ways, encouraging the use of "soft power," boosting economic aid, engaging political and tribal leaders, and working with former insurgents against al-Qaeda and the Jaish al-Mahdi. Most important, it was at the tactical level, overseen by battalion commanders, that the strategic emphasis on combat outposts was implemented. Across central Iraq, colonels and lieutenant colonels shouldered the risk of stationing their troops in exposed outposts from which they could more effectively secure the population. Without adequate manpower, previous plans had avoided such outposts in an attempt to keep casualties down, but the new doctrine recognized that this was self-defeating: If you don't provide tangible security to the population, military victories will need to be won over and over.

> A major reason for the lack of U.S. success in 2005 and 2006 was the way in which operations were planned and conducted—often at the division level or below, but rarely, if ever, at the essential corps level.

A TALE OF TWO SURGES

Besides the arrival of Petraeus, the single most highly publicized change in Iraq in 2007 was the surge of additional U.S. military forces into the country. Often treated as the entirety of the new strategy, the surge of forces was in reality just one element, providing Odierno with the means to conduct a "surge of operations" (Odierno's phrase) at the corps level and to overhaul his command's counterinsurgency tactics.

The "surge of forces" entailed the deployment of five U.S. combat brigades and an additional division headquarters to Iraq. Brigades—units of several thousand soldiers grouped into battalions—are the major tactical formation in this war, overseeing cities and provinces, or districts of Baghdad. Within these areas, the colonels who command brigades have tremendous power and responsibility. Since the invasion, there had typically been about 15 brigades spread across Iraq. At that level, moving a unit to one area to respond to a crisis inevitably meant cutting forces in another. Between February and May of last year, the number of brigades in Iraq rose from 15 to 20, as two extra brigades were dispatched to Baghdad and three to the "belts" that Odierno's advisers had deemed important to the coming effort.

The benefit of this reinforcement was flexibility. The surge from 140,000 to 170,000 troops may not sound like a lot, but to Odierno and his division commanders it meant an increase from having roughly 55 battalions at their disposal to having more than 70—a major shift that let them break out of the static pattern of 2005 and 2006. The "surge of forces" made possible the corps-level "surge of operations" that took place beginning in late winter.

One reason for the U.S. reverses in 2005 and 2006 was the way in which operations were planned and conducted—often at the division level or below, but rarely, if ever, at the essential corps level. Odierno's predecessors, John Vines and Peter Chiarelli, did what they could, but their hands were tied by operating within the confines of a 15-brigade force. In the two years following the second battle of Fallujah, the force levels available in Iraq dictated the strategy, rather than the strategy dictating the force levels.

Some commanders understood the importance of moving off their large bases to conduct population-security operations, but doing that properly requires a lot of men, and in most cases they simply didn't have enough. Instead they resorted to less effective raiding operations aimed at wearing down the enemy, a Sisyphean task. Enemy forces quickly understood this limitation and seized the initiative, using their freedom of movement to establish base areas of their own. From these they could threaten weak U.S. supply routes with roadside bombs, intimidate the population, influence local economies and politics, and incite sectarian conflict.

In 2007, these constraints changed dramatically as MNC-I launched three carefully planned operations aimed at shaping the situation across the country, not just in Baghdad or a single province. The first of these, Operation Fardh al-Qanoon (often referred to simply as the "Baghdad Security Plan"), began in late February, when the first two surge brigades arrived in Baghdad. The objective was to tamp down the rampant sectarian violence in the city—not necessarily to decrease it, but simply to cap it for the spring, while the rest of the surge forces built up in the belts.

Public expectations for the operation were high, and were inevitably disappointed. Its mission was, after all, limited to capping violence at current levels and halting the Jaish al-Mahdi's westward advance, not reversing the violence, as many expected. Given these limited objectives, though, Fardh al-Qanoon–led by Major General Fil's 1st Cavalry Division—was successful. It stopped the advance of the Jaish al-Mahdi without inflaming resistance among sympathetic Shiites in south-central Iraq, and it contained al-Qaeda's strongholds in western Baghdad without forcing the terrorist fighters out of the city and into areas where they could do more harm.

The second offensive began in mid-June, a week after the fifth surge brigade stood up south of Baghdad. Dubbed "Operation

Phantom Thunder," it shifted the focus from Baghdad to the belts, with the objective of destroying the bases from which al-Qaeda supplied and planned its Baghdad operations. For six weeks Phantom Thunder focused on two Qaeda-heavy areas, the northeastern belt around Baquba and the southeastern belt around Arab Jabour. Major General Lynch's newly arrived 3rd Infantry Division isolated and then cleared the latter region, while Major General Mixon's 25th Infantry Division cleared and secured the city of Baquba, a Sunni insurgent hotbed that had been compared in the press to Fallujah. Unlike previous seizures of cities, the offensive in Baquba was planned as an enduring operation, with U.S. troops remaining in the positions they seized for months, backed by Iraqi units, instead of turning them over to the Iraqis as soon as possible. By early August, although al-Qaeda remained active in both places, it no longer had the initiative.

The third corps-level offensive, which I had the privilege to witness in several areas of the country, was Operation Phantom Strike. This offensive built on the success of Phantom Thunder by taking the fight to adjacent areas: the Diyala Valley, the Tigris Valley around Tarmiya, and Babil Province south of Baghdad. Mixon's and Lynch's forces conducted fierce, targeted offensives against clusters of displaced Qaeda forces, breaking them up while they were still reeling from the blows of June and July. Lasting through the fall, Phantom Strike delivered a body blow to al-Qaeda's organization and supply routes north and south of Baghdad, leading to the strangulation and death of the group's last Baghdad stronghold, in Rashid.

SECURING COMMUNITIES, WINNING ALLIES

Throughout all three corps offensives, U.S. forces relied heavily on classic counterinsurgency tactics. This was a switch from the first several years of the war. During 2003 in particular, but also in the years that followed, many U.S. units focused entirely on targeted raids—violent efforts to take down insurgency leaders and strongholds and thus break enemy groups down through attrition. Classic counterinsurgency doctrine, long forgotten by U.S. military institutions, makes clear that while raids have their place, they cannot be the major focus if any kind of sustained progress is to be expected. The center of gravity in counterinsurgency operations is the population, not the enemy, and the objective is the population's security, not the destruction of all insurgents—an impossible goal.

The tendency to focus on raids, rather than steady patrolling and trust-building, is natural to a military focused on offensive operations. It was exacerbated by the lack of doctrinal guidance from above. The rounding up of suspected insurgents in 2003 across Salahuddin and Diyala, the atrocities at Haditha in 2005 and Mahmudiya in 2006, the hasty drawdown from Tel Afar in 2006—these are among the most dramatic legacies of this vacuum of tactical counterinsurgency guidance, but the damage done was countrywide.

Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno in Baghdad

Only in 2007 was this problem remedied. Classic counterinsurgency doctrine, known to individual commanders who sought it out but institutionally ignored, was codified and published in 2006, and when Petraeus and Odierno took command that doctrine began to take hold. By mid-2007 the situation was reversed. Where before, units practicing sound counterinsurgency tactics had been isolated instances, now the vast majority made every effort to follow the new doctrine to the letter and provide security for the population.

Outlying combat outposts, exposed but essential, have spread from western Baghdad across the city and the belts. Lynch's 3rd Infantry Division, which arrived in the southern belt only in April, now oversees more than 50 of them. Without this change, none of the three corps-level offensives would have had any lasting effect. The downside has been increased vulnerability to snipers and vehicle bombings, leading to an upward spike in casualties this spring and summer, but the results have paid off. Codified by doctrine, encouraged by Petraeus and Odierno, and applied by such brigade commanders as Cols. J. B. Burton, Ricky Gibbs, Terry Ferrell, and Jon Lehr, as well as many superb battalion commanders, these tactics have allowed U.S. troops to consolidate their gains and prevent an enemy resurgence. The ties created with local leaders by this approach made possible one of the key elements of the fall's success—tribal reconciliation, first with Sunni tribes in Anbar and the outskirts of Baghdad, and then with Shiite communities who were leaning away from the increasingly irrelevant Jaish al-Mahdi. This has been the most important tool at the disposal of U.S. forces in consolidating the gains of the spring and summer: a broad mandate to negotiate with communities and individuals who in the past were loyal to al-Qaeda and other extremist groups.

The credit for this advance, more than any other, belongs not to Petraeus and Odierno, but to innovative commanders in Anbar Province who seized an opportunity to negotiate with tribes that had grown disillusioned with al-Qaeda. In the spring and summer of 2006, the Anbari city of Ramadi was the deadliest area in all of Iraq, accounting for as much as 40 percent of all Sunni insurgent attacks. But in the war-torn city and its surroundings, al-Qaeda, long harbored by local tribes resentful of heavy-handed U.S. methods, overstepped its bounds, as its increasingly violent and gang-like rank and file began to employ brutal tactics. Tribal leaders reached out to the U.S. brigade commander in the city, Col. Sean MacFarland, for help, and MacFarland and his officers jumped at the opportunity. By early 2007, when a new unit rotated in, Ramadi had become one of the most peaceful cities in Iraq, with al-Qaeda turned out on its heels. The same success was soon replicated throughout Major General Gaskin's Anbar Province, which was once the heart of the insurgency but has for almost a year been the country's most stable region.

Credit does belong to Petraeus, Odierno, and their commands, though, for embracing this approach and pushing it beyond Anbar to the areas of the belts cleared by the summer's corps offensives.

GETTY

With the encouragement of the generals and effective application by unit commanders, it has been replicated all over Iraq: in Babil Province, the Diyala Valley, Sunni areas of western Baghdad, the Zaab Valley near Kirkuk, and, most recently, Shiite areas of southern Baghdad, where the eviction of al-Qaeda has made the Jaish al-Mahdi and its extortionist tactics unwelcome. Without the "awakening," as it is called, of these Sunni and now Shiite communities, large portions of rural Iraq and western and southern Baghdad that are now peaceful could never have been cleared, let alone held.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Last spring, as I was planning a summer visit to Baghdad and the belts, Petraeus offered me this prediction: "It will be heartening in some respects, sobering in others." He was right: Seeing the difficulties U.S. units face in the field was indeed sobering. But this summer was a tipping point. Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike, coming on the heels of Fardh al-Qanoon and the buildup to 20 brigades, enabled a shift in both strategy and tactics that has led to a cascade of positive results: successful efforts at tribal reconciliation, irreparable damage to al-Qaeda in Iraq, and a power realignment between the Shiite population of Baghdad and the Jaish al-Mahdi. The result has been a dramatic and undeniable decrease in violence across Iraq.

Both the surge of forces and the surge of operations are rapidly winding down. Petraeus now controls 19 brigades, not 20, and by July that number will be down to 15 again; meanwhile, the U.S. division commanders have begun to rotate home. Odierno will follow them in February, when Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin relieves him. How the situation in Iraq will respond when Iraqi units replace Americans is an open question. Yet the mechanics of the drawdown are not all that will decide whether the security gains of 2007 can be sustained, or built upon, in 2008. The surge, both of forces and of operations, was always intended to be temporary, but the changes it facilitated are meant to last much longer.

The shift in counterinsurgency tactics has rooted itself in the mentality of U.S. commanders in Iraq, due in part to revamped training programs and in part to years of combat experience. This mindset will almost certainly remain even as the force is cut. Indeed, a fourth sophisticated corps offensive, Operation Phantom Phoenix, is already underway. It's less certain how well the tribal-reconciliation effort can be sustained—and on that question rests the fate of the gains made this year. Continuing the current understandings with Sunni tribes will not be enough; unless such arrangements continue spreading to Shiite communities, there will inevitably be further sectarian conflict.

But despite these uncertainties, the successes of this past year must not be underestimated. The strategy that President Bush framed a year ago as a surge into Baghdad became a countrywide success—not only against al-Qaeda, which has been all but defeated in central Iraq, but also, more subtly, against the Jaish al-Mahdi. For these great but tenuous gains to be lost due to an overly hasty drawdown in 2008 would be a tremendous waste. But by carefully guarding the successes our troops have had so far, and by taking the greatest possible pains not to turn operational control over to the Iraqis too quickly, that sad fate can be avoided. Because of the surge, Iraq does have a chance—a real chance. **NR**

PEOPLE

Around the World With Shultz

A visit to the former secretary of state

JAY NORDLINGER

Palo Alto, Calif.

IN the second volume of his memoirs—published in 1982—Henry Kissinger said something extraordinary about George Shultz: "I met no one in public life for whom I developed greater respect and affection." Kissinger continued,

> Highly analytical, calm and unselfish, Shultz made up in integrity and judgment for his lack of the flamboyance by which some of his more insecure colleagues attempted to make their mark. He never sought personal advancement. By not threatening anyone's prerogatives, and, above all, by his outstanding performance, he became the dominant member of every committee he joined. . . . If I could choose one American to whom I would entrust the nation's fate in a crisis, it would be George Shultz.

In the praise department, you really can't beat that. But Shultz is used to such praise, being the object of almost universal respect. Remind yourself of the basic biographical facts about him. He was born in 1920, and went to Princeton. (You may remember a story about a particular tiger tattoo.) He went to MIT for a Ph.D. in industrial economics. In time, he became dean of the University of Chicago Business School. Under Nixon, he was secretary of labor, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and treasury secretary. Under Reagan, he was secretary of state—from 1982 to 1989. The year he left office, he joined the Hoover Institution, on the campus of Stanford University.

And that is where I meet him for a wide-ranging discussion.

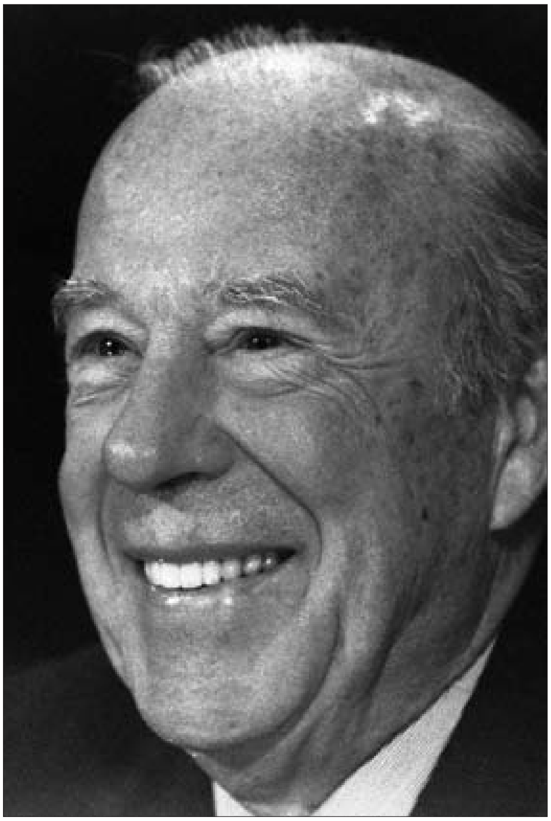
As I turn on my tape recorder—uncertain about whether it will work—I say, "Well, I guess we just have to trust it." Shultz responds, "We always said, 'Trust but verify'"—or *Doveryai, no proveryai*, in Russian. We both chuckle in remembering how it used to drive Gorbachev crazy when Reagan said this. At Shultz's side is an illuminated globe, and this prompts me to ask him about a test he would give to new U.S. ambassadors. "They'd been through all kinds of exams and so on—confirmation—and I'd say to them, 'Well, there's just one more test you have to pass.'" They'd usually groan. "'You have to walk over to that globe and demonstrate to me that you can identify your country.' And, inevitably, they would point out the country to which they had been assigned."

The correct answer, of course, was the United States—that was their country. And Shultz's moral was, "Never forget what country you're representing."

As our interview proceeds, Shultz is fluent and knowledge-able, measured and commanding. You can see why presidents and others have liked to listen to him, and take his advice, over the years. And he looks pretty much like he did when he was secretary of state, except thinner. In addition, you're perhaps unaccustomed to seeing George Shultz in tennis shoes.

We talk about Reagan, and I point out that his reputation has risen markedly in recent years: Even his old enemies—many of them—have warm things to say about him these days. Shultz cites the book *Reagan, in His Own Hand*, a collection of pre-presidential writings. Kiron Skinner, a former research assistant to Shultz, spearheaded this project. And it was Shultz who wrote Nancy Reagan recommending that Skinner be given access to the relevant papers. The book shows a keen and questing mind at work, not the dope of anti-Reagan legend.

Shultz also mentions a collection of Reagan letters—and points out that Reagan was an inveterate, unceasing letter-writer. As president, Shultz explains, Reagan insisted on answering at least some of his mail—mail that came from ordinary Americans. He'd take a sampling of letters up to Camp David and answer them there. He would seal those answers up, then hand the envelopes to the staff, for mailing. "They knew where the letters were going, but they didn't know what they said. It drove them absolutely insane." Shultz chuckles: "Can you imagine?" As he says, Reagan turned out to have written "beautiful letters, about human subjects." And "this showed the depth of the man."


George Shultz

As Shultz talks about Reagan, he makes a familiar point, but makes it particularly well: Reagan had underlying beliefs, and these beliefs went deep; and his policies derived from them. "That's one reason he was so consistent, I think." Shultz himself is an idea man, "basically a university man," he says. "The ideas serve as your compass. And maybe you have to tack and whatnot, but your compass tells you where you're going." Eventually, you arrive at your destination, no matter what the zig-zagging. But without a compass, "you're just moving around."

Shultz recalls that Reagan hung tough when recession threatened, then bit, in his first term, and that he hung tough against the Soviet Union—reversing the policies of détente. "Détente said, 'We're here, you're here, that's life, the name of the game is peaceful coexistence.' Reagan said, 'No, they have a very unstable system, and it's not going to last. It's going to change'"—and he helped precipitate that change. Under détente, you would never have said that Communism was destined for the ash heap of history, and you would never have called the Soviet Union an evil empire.

Shultz smiles at remembering Paul Nitze, the urbane, veteran diplomat. He was testifying before a panel of senators, being worked over by the Democrats. One of them said, "How can you serve in an administration whose president calls the Soviet Union an 'evil empire'?" Nitze answered, "Did you ever consider the possibility that it's true?"

In December 1988, at the very end of the Reagan administration, Gorbachev gave a speech at the U.N., and it was clear from this speech, says Shultz, that the Cold War was over. Yes, "the endgame was managed very well by President Bush"—the first President Bush. "I'm not disputing that." Still, "it was basically over—all over but the shouting." And the Cold War, of course, contains many lessons for the current War on Terror.

GIVE-AND-TAKE

Shultz was an éminence grise in the George W. Bush camp as the Texas governor was gearing up to run for president. Shultz led discussions of policy, involving various luminaries. Bush enjoyed the give-and-take, Shultz recalls. "And he knew how to ask questions." Anyone can ask the first question, says Shultz—but then you have to go on to ask the second, third, and fourth ones; you have to bore in on a problem. And this, says Shultz, Bush did very effectively.

One time, at the governor's mansion in Austin, Shultz and his wife spent an evening with Bush and the former defense secretary, Dick Cheney. As they were leaving, Shultz said to his wife, "You know, those two guys clicked"—Bush and Cheney. You could see it. Just as Shultz could see, earlier—in his living room—that Bush and Condoleezza Rice clicked.

I ask Shultz a question of the hour: whether those of us who supported the Iraq War should now be embarrassed about it, given the difficulty and anguish of it. Shultz says, "Well, I'm a person who supported the Iraq War." Then he proceeds with characteristic orderliness: All the intelligence said that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction—chemical and biological. Furthermore, his nuclear ambitions were plain. As the invasion demonstrated, the intelligence was wrong—but "there are some things that haven't gotten much publicity, and I don't know quite why." (I know why. But Shultz has much greater faith in the objectivity and disinterest of the media than I do.) Post-invasion reports have shown that Saddam had weapons programs on the shelf, ready to go, just as soon as U.N. inspection collapsed, as it was bound to do. Moreover, he had terrorist training camps operating under his gaze.

All of this means that, if we had not acted, Saddam "would have been a big problem, and you would be writing stories

RICARDO WATSON/UPI

about, 'Why can't anyone connect the dots?'" Shultz concludes, "I think it's obvious that after the initial victory we didn't handle things right, but I don't apologize for being in favor of going in." Shultz also believes, incidentally, that the world will think better of George W. Bush later than it does now.

As for the general War on Terror, he sees three stages, which are as follows: First, we were attacked constantly by terrorists—going back to the 1970s and culminating in 9/11—and never did anything about it. Second, after those horrible attacks on that horrible day, we reacted. Now—in a third stage—we must achieve "sustainability." We have to put things on a "sustainable basis," which is to say, we have to institutionalize, or regularize, our efforts. This, we did in the Cold War, with a number of "sustainable policies": the Marshall Plan, NATO, Radio Free Europe, and so on. These programs were not particularly subject to partisan argument, and when a new administration came in, the programs essentially stayed. Shultz gives an example of a present need: We must decide, once and for all, how to treat terrorist detainees—they certainly can't be treated like traditional POWs.

And, during the Cold War, we bothered to learn a lot about peoples behind the Iron Curtain, and how to communicate with them. Have we done this with the Arab and Islamic world? "No way"; we're "nowhere near it."

Further, says Shultz, if we are to attain victory in the War on Terror, we have to borrow a page from the beginning of the Cold War and come up with a containment policy for today: "Our object is to contain the spread of radical Islam, that uses terror, and help whatever you want to call it—mainstream Islam—learn how to be part of the modern world in a manner consistent with their religion." Also, the opening up of economies makes a big difference in the opening up of governments: as in Chile, Taiwan, and South Korea, to name three.

UNENDING STRUGGLE

Speaking of economics, I ask whether capitalism has achieved some final victory over socialism, and Shultz quickly shakes his head: "You have to keep working all the time." In fact, there is a struggle going on in America right now: "What's the health-care debate about, really? It's not about whether there are going to be adequate resources for people to have health care. It's about whether those resources will be in the hands of a bureaucracy, which administers a health-care system à la Canada and Europe, or in the hands of consumers, who will decide for themselves." Shultz's latest book, written with John B. Shoven, is about reforming health care and Social Security.

Shultz is sunnier than the average conservative, for example about the press. (I suggested as much earlier.) In his years in government, he had a pretty positive experience with the Fourth Estate. He explains that reporters around the White House are political, concerned about who's up and who's down. But the reporters in the departments—the cabinet departments—tend to be diligent and conscientious types who know their subject well. Similarly, Shultz had positive experiences with departmental bureaucracies, the source of so much conservative frustration—quite apart from whether such a bureaucracy should run American health care. When he became labor secretary, people told Shultz that he, as a Republican, could never get anything done. The department worked for George Meany and the AFL-CIO, period. But Shultz says that he and other political appointees "worked hard, and the career people responded. They knocked themselves out for us, in an honest way." Shultz had an equally happy experience at the State Department: The career people may not have adored Reagan's foreign policy, but they too "knocked themselves out for us. I have nothing but good things to say about them."

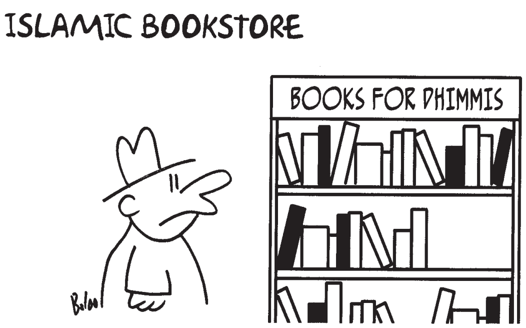
I ask the former SecState about various world trouble spots, including North Korea. He says, "We know that North Korea has an unblemished track record of not keeping its promises, so the pressure has to be kept on. But I don't think it's beyond the realm of possibility that there could be in the next few years a real shift on the Korean peninsula—basically because the North is so bad, and it's getting worse. They can't feed themselves. Everybody wants to get out if they can, and would if they could. I would think we ought to do more to facilitate that." Shultz remembers the Eastern European states, and the kind of underground railroad they had. And he recalls a joke about Erich Honecker, the East German chief.

He had this hot new girlfriend, and he was crazy about her. He said, "I'll do anything for you." "Anything, Erich?" "Yes, anything." "All right then: I want you to tear down the Berlin Wall." "Oh!" says Honecker. "You want to be alone with me!"

In the present U.S. election, Shultz has a candidate: John McCain. And I ask whether a Democratic victory would badly damage the American position in the world. He says, "I don't know. I'm not a person who sees catastrophe. Our country's pretty good and stable." He then quotes his late friend and "hero," Milton Friedman, who himself was paraphrasing Adam Smith: "There's a lot of ruin in the United States." And, as far as I'm concerned, ruin could be reduced if more men like George Shultz came to the fore. **NR**

> If we are to attain victory in the War on Terror, says Shultz, we have to borrow a page from the beginning of the Cold War and come up with a containment policy for today.

HELP!!!!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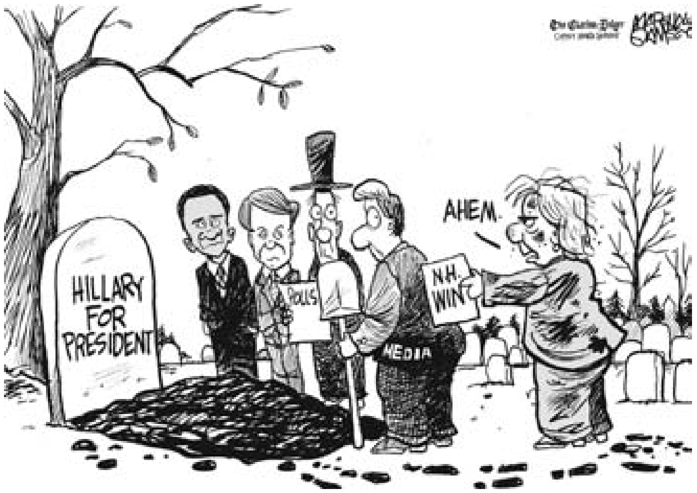
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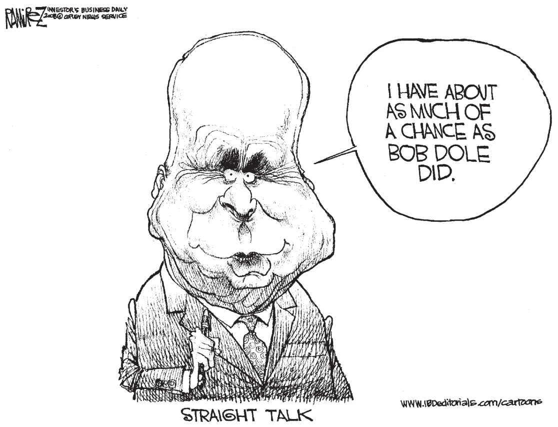
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I HAVE ABOUT AS MUCH OF A CHANCE AS BOB DOLE DID.
STRAIGHT TALK
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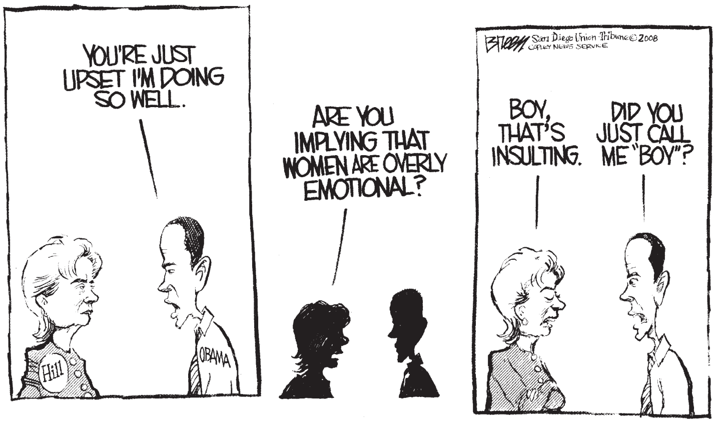
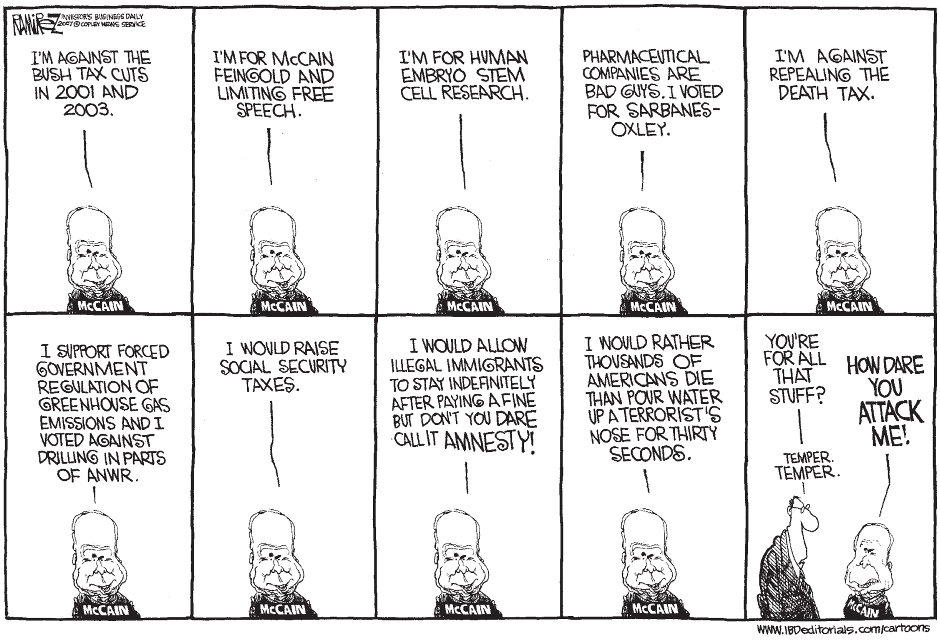

YOU'RE JUST UPSET I'M DOING SO WELL.
HILL
OBAMA
ARE YOU IMPLYING THAT WOMEN ARE OVERLY EMOTIONAL?
BREEN San Diego Union-Tribune © 2008 COPLEY NEWS SERVICE
BOY, THAT'S INSULTING.
DID YOU JUST CALL ME "BOY"?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I'M AGAINST THE BUSH TAX CUTS IN 2001 AND 2003.
McCAIN
I'M FOR McCAIN FEINGOLD AND LIMITING FREE SPEECH.
McCAIN
I'M FOR HUMAN EMBRYO STEM CELL RESEARCH.
McCAIN
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES ARE BAD GUYS. I VOTED FOR SARBANES-OXLEY.
McCAIN
I'M AGAINST REPEALING THE DEATH TAX.
McCAIN
I SUPPORT FORCED GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND I VOTED AGAINST DRILLING IN PARTS OF ANWR.
McCAIN
I WOULD RAISE SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES.
McCAIN
I WOULD ALLOW ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO STAY INDEFINITELY AFTER PAYING A FINE BUT DON'T YOU DARE CALL IT AMNESTY!
McCAIN
I WOULD RATHER THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS DIE THAN POUR WATER UP A TERRORIST'S NOSE FOR THIRTY SECONDS.
McCAIN
YOU'RE FOR ALL THAT STUFF?
HOW DARE YOU ATTACK ME!
TEMPER. TEMPER.
McCAIN
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the long view

ROB LONG

Therapist's Notes

The New York Times Company Mental Health Clinic

First Session:
The clients gathered for the first time today for our surge-related-depression clinic. Forgot to order extra chairs, so for the first few moments several of the clients were forced to stand "Gitmo style," as one of them complained. When asked to elaborate, client simply lashed out and accused therapist of "forgetting" and "sweeping under the rug" the unconstitutional actions of the Bush administration. The arrival of more chairs seemed to help matters, but there was still a general sense among the clients that it was too little, too late. Even as they took their seats, there was a lot of grumbling about the "chair surge" not really solving the problem. They complained that the therapist had misled them into believing that there would be enough chairs to begin with, that the therapist had lied to them, that the therapist had poorly planned the first session. When asked to describe how they were feeling, several of the clients simply sobbed quietly. The session ended in silence.

Second Session:
The clients gathered today in a deep state of gloom and paranoia. The news from Iraq seems grimmer and grimmer. Attempts to reconnect clients with the more positive side of things—a faltering economy, the potential for worldwide economic depression, the lack of national health insurance—fail to make inroads. Clients seem stuck in a negative pattern of cognition: Issues of self-worth and self-empowerment are enmeshed with the events in Iraq. A few are cheered by reports that recent Iraq War veterans seem to be disproportionately represented among violent criminals, but others may require medication.

Third Session:
The therapist began the session by announcing some good news. Wire services were reporting that a car bomb was said to have exploded in an area of Baghdad, killing dozens of bystanders. The session then began on a cheerful note, with many of the clients expressing cautious optimism that their surge-related depression was lifting. Many of them smiled for the first time during therapy, and a general sense of joviality and laughter pervaded. "You see?" one of them said. "The surge is a failure!"

Therapist then asked them all to share some good news of their own. Several contributed stories of their children's successes at various private schools in the Manhattan area. Others talked happily about the previous week's episode of HBO's *The Wire*. Still others talked about finding a few great new ethnic restaurants. The session evolved into a general, upbeat conversation. The therapist asked each client to create a sense-memory association with these emotions, to be able to summon them up at will. Clients all agreed to practice this exercise.

Then, therapist informed clients that the wire services had not, in fact, reported a car bomb. To the contrary, the past 48 hours in Iraq had been incident-free.

Immediately, the depression returned. There was some sobbing, and in a few cases some of the clients rolled themselves up into fetal balls.

Therapist urged them all to remember how they felt just prior to his announcement. To remember the happy news about children, HBO, and Thai food. To use the sense-memory exercise. Clients threw coffee and food at therapist. Therapist suggested increasing dosage.

Fourth Session:
This was the final session covered entirely by the Employee Health Plan (with $20 co-pay). Therapist attempted to engage clients in a serious examination of their thought patterns. He reminded them that this was the final covered session, although he is available for follow-on sessions on a pay-per-session basis.

Clients were led through a series of image-reaction exercises to try to isolate and identify certain thought patterns and associations that lead to this kind of reactive depression. Clients were shown photographs of people and events in the news, and asked a series of multiple-choice questions after each image. Although the exercise was carefully designed to identify individual, unique patterns, therapist was surprised to discover that all clients scored exactly the same, each one responding identically. Therapist remains baffled by the statistical anomaly, and concludes that the exercise must be flawed in some way, as the alternative explanation, that all employees of the *New York Times* think exactly alike, is too bizarre to be seriously considered.

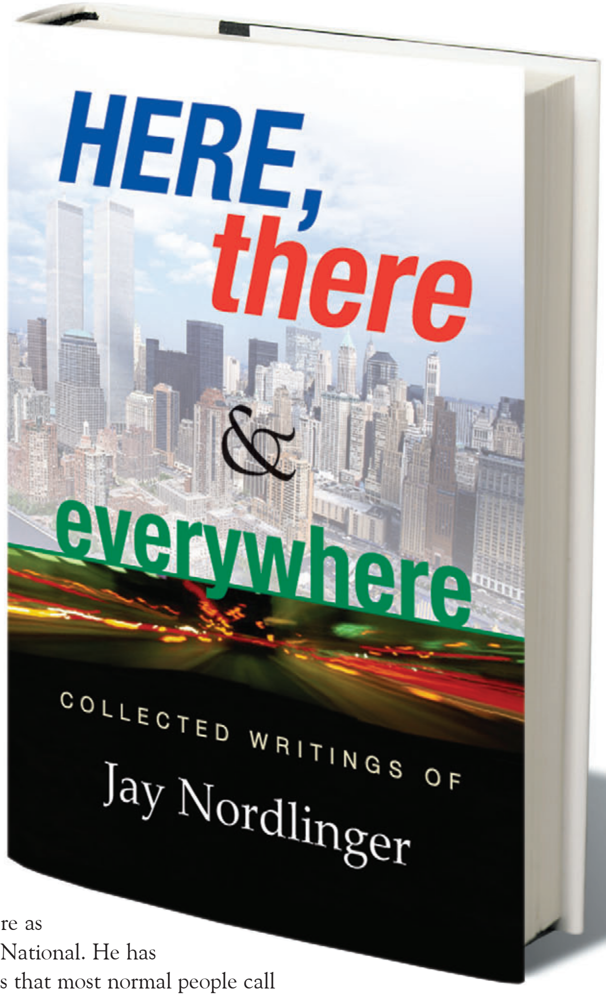
The session ended without progress.

Recommendation to senior management:
Attempt to downplay coverage of the Iraq troop surge and its related successes. For the mental health of the employees of the *New York Times*, management is urged to focus resources on more positive topics, such as global warming and economic collapse. Also, electroshock treatment may be indicated.

O JAY, CAN YOU SEE?

And does he ever see in his new collection — you will, too

We're happy to announce a new collection from *National Review* senior editor Jay Nordlinger: *Here, There & Everywhere*. This handsome 528-page hardcover is a must for your library, and makes a wonderful gift. Here's what some leading lights have to say about Jay, his remarkable talents, and this long-awaited, wonderful array of essays, reports, speeches, and ruminations:



PAUL JOHNSON: Jay Nordlinger is one of America's most versatile and pungent writers. He is at home in geopolitics and sociology, in sport and music and literature, and to all these topics he brings an inquiring mind, deep knowledge, and an engaging style. This collection shows him at his wide-ranging best.

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MARK STEYN: Unlike most of us political pundits, Jay Nordlinger has many other strings to his bow. In fact, most of us don't even have a bow, but Jay does: You're as likely to find him at Bayreuth or Salzburg as at a political convention. Or at Augusta National. He has what British politicians term a "hinterland"—a vast array of interests beyond politics that most normal people call "life." He writes brilliantly about music, and profoundly about golf, and very perceptively about those strange little linguistic tics that seem to pop up out of nowhere and catch the spirit of the age. For his fans, this long overdue Nordlinger reader is a virtuoso display of his rare versatility, on subjects from Rummy to Rosie, Cuba to comedy, ethnic cleansing in Iraq to "erotic vagrancy" in Hollywood. He is a Jay of all trades and a master of . . . well, almost all (we have a few musical differences).

RUSH LIMBAUGH: Jay Nordlinger is a Renaissance man, and this book proves it. It's witty, grabbing, and fun. Nordlinger tackles an array of issues, big and small, with rare humor and insight. He also says nice things about me—which counts for a lot. I couldn't put it down.

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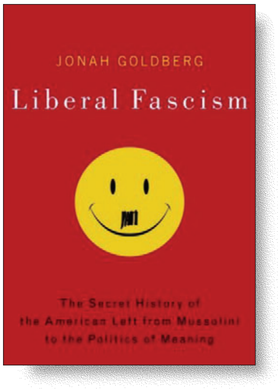
JONAH GOLDBERG
Liberal Fascism
The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning

Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning, by Jonah Goldberg (Doubleday, 496 pp., $27.95)

PAUL JOHNSON

No political term has been more overused and misused than "fascism." Since the 1930s it has been a word of indiscriminate abuse by the Left for anyone a scintilla to the right of them. And from the 1970s onward many right-wing commentators have used the term "fascist Left" to denote authoritarian tendencies on the socialist, liberal, or Democratic side of the political equation. I have used it myself when in a bad temper. Jonah Goldberg has now produced a comprehensive book that summarizes all the ways in which the liberal Left, principally in America, can legitimately be accused of fascist policies and states of mind.

The book is meaty with little-known facts, audacious intuitions, and sophisticated persiflage. Republican activists, whether in the media or on the platform, will find it an indispensable handbook for rough-and-tumble debate. Here are some of Goldberg's thrusts, for which he supplies energetic evidence. Woodrow Wilson was responsible for "the birth of liberal fascism." FDR's New Deal was essentially fascist. So was the street-and-campus agitation of the 1960s. JFK's myth and LBJ's dream were both hallmarked by the fascist "cult of the state." The liberal stress on race politics reflected "the eugenic ghost in the fascist machine." Liberal economic theory and practice have fascist characteristics. So has Hillary Clinton's "New Village."

Mr. Johnson is an author and historian. His most recent book is *Heroes: From Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar to Churchill and de Gaulle.*

Anyone today who uses the word "fascist," except in its strict historical context, implicitly admits: "I intend to be combative rather than fair-minded." Thus, to take Goldberg's first example, while it's true Woodrow Wilson signed the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918, and enforced them, one of his main reasons for opposing America's entry into World War I was precisely that such legislation would inexorably follow, together with a vast and deplorable expansion of government power. As Randolph Bourne put it, "War is the health of the State"; war, or any situation of extreme peril for a society, whether military or economic, tends to produce ruthless and authoritarian behavior by government. The case that Wilson was a fascist could equally be made against Lincoln.

A more persuasive example, in my view, is the behavior of FDR. His persecution of Andrew Mellon for imaginary tax evasion was exactly the kind of abuse that regularly occurred in both Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. The hounding of Mellon, an outstanding treasury secretary and the creator and embellisher of the National Gallery in Washington, was a legal and constitutional crime unique in American history, and reflected a personal decision of Roosevelt himself. It was possible only because of the atmosphere of fear and panic created by the Great Depression. A similar atmosphere might have been created by the Islamic-fundamentalist assault on the American population, and similarly exploited. Happily, George W. Bush has steered the country through the crisis, so far, without any resort to fascist-style methods.

But what exactly are such methods? Indeed, what precisely was Fascism? The party was founded by Mussolini, a former socialist singled out by Lenin for praise, on March 23, 1919, and Goldberg quotes its purpose in detail. It was essentially left-wing and democratic: universal suffrage (which meant giving the vote to women), the eight-hour day, a minimum wage, old-age pensions, measures against church wealth and the secular rich, workers' councils, and some nationalization. Mussolini himself called Fascism "the refuge of all heretics, the church of all heresies." His first three years in power, 1922–5, were comparatively liberal and marked by freedom of speech and of the press. Jews played a prominent part in setting up the regime. Previous governments since Italian unification had been inefficient and corrupt, and the world, including many intellectuals, gave Fascism in its first phase a favorable reception. Goldberg reminds us that an early version of the Cole Porter song read:

> You're the top! You're the Great Houdini!
> You're the top! You are Mussolini.

The number of world-famous figures who paid tribute to what Mussolini was doing in the 1920s—combating malaria by draining the Pontine Marches; building roads, railways, and magnificent railway stations; suppressing the Mafia—included Lloyd George and Churchill. But, following the murder of Giacomo Matteotti in 1924, and its consequences, there was a radical move toward authoritarianism, announced in a speech by Mussolini on October 28, 1925. It is worth reading because it marked the real beginning of Fascism and the corporate state. Opposition newspapers were banned, and opposition leaders confined on a penal island. Opposition, said Mussolini, was unnecessary because it already existed sufficiently in himself and his powers of self-criticism. This was a beautiful piece of Leninism. Then came his famous formula: "Everything within the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State." Thereafter Mussolini and his regime were doomed, because the Italian state lacked the administrative resources to run everything efficiently, and Mussolini himself was a classic case of a man easily corrupted by power, and indeed by others, such as Hitler.

Hitler's Nazi party had virtually nothing in common with Fascism other than its

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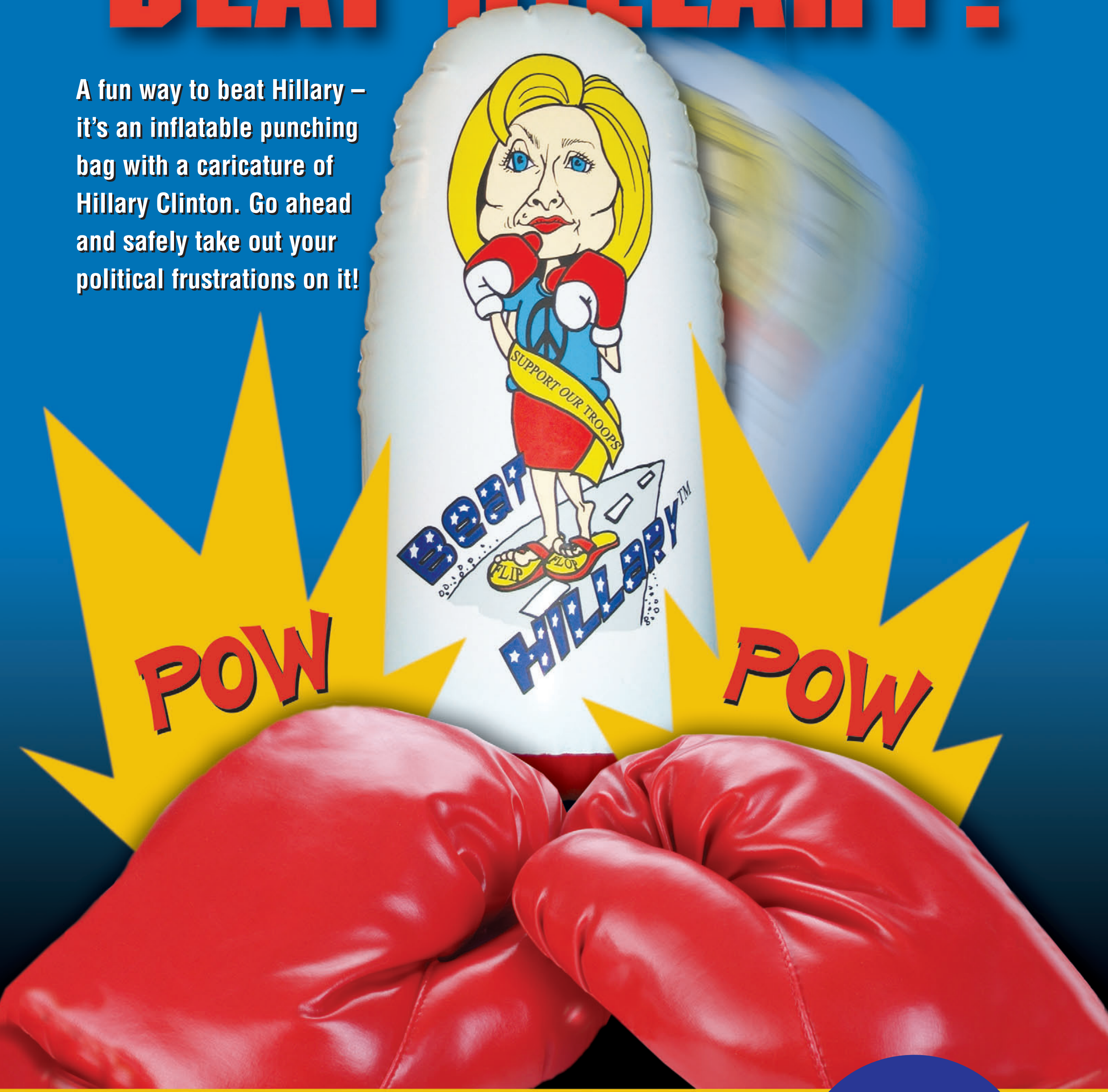

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generally left-wing viewpoint. Its 1920 platform, which Goldberg quotes, owed more to Leninism. Hitler's chief aim was to abolish the Versailles settlement and introduce pan-German racism, which involved expelling the Jews. If war came, the "Final Solution" of the "Jewish Problem" would take place. The most characteristic expression of Nazi theory, once the regime was installed, was the Nuremberg Laws, which were racial. Hitler's suppression of the trade unions, combined with his rearmament and road-construction programs, enabled him to end mass unemployment; Germany was the first, indeed the only, great power to do so. Hitler's work was much admired and attempts to imitate him were made across Europe, from Ireland to Romania. Nazi-style parties were ubiquitous, and had a variety of names and doctrines.

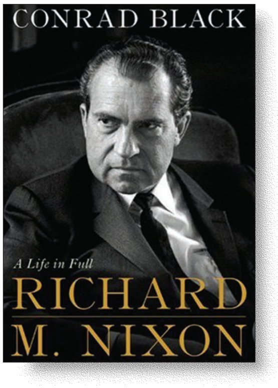
The question of nomenclature was permanently confused by the skill of the Soviet Communists in propaganda, and its amplification by the intellectual Left everywhere. The Soviets were initially perplexed by the rise of Mussolini, and still more by Hitler. There was nothing in Marx, or even Lenin, to prepare them for the rise of populist parties of the Left that could beat the Communists in both the streets and the voting booth. Goldberg quotes the Communist ideologue Karl Radek explaining in 1923 that "Fascism is middle-class socialism and we cannot persuade the middle classes to abandon it until we can prove to them that it only makes their condition worse." This went some way toward the truth; but an alternative explanation, by Leon Trotsky—that fascism was the last gasp of capitalism—was more popular among Marxists because it could be supported by Marxist texts.

Also, the word "fascism" could be generalized into a denunciation of anything the far Left hated. In 1928 the Third International, dominated by Stalin, produced the useful formula of "social fascism." This could be applied not only to Nazism as well as the original Italian form, but also to all varieties of Western democratic socialism. They were all equally evil and to be resisted. Finally, in 1933, appeared an official Soviet definition, on Stalin's orders: "Fascism is the unconcealed terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, and imperialist elements of finance capital." This jargon reflected the failure of supposedly "scientific" Marxism to predict the most striking political development of the inter-war years. It made no sense at all but was an invitation, quickly accepted, to the left-wing intelligentsia to describe as fascism anything they did not like. So the confusion has remained, and the habit of right-wingers to describe as fascist anything they do not like about the Left merely extends the confusion.

We can console ourselves by reflecting that no one has produced a satisfactory definition of "liberalism" either. Indeed it means profoundly different things depending on which side of the Atlantic you live. Nor have we got a universally approved definition of "conservatism," and the advent of neoconservatism has merely compounded the ambiguities. There is something to be said for the English tradition of using potent but, strictly speaking, meaningless terms. Thus thoroughgoing British Conservatives call themselves "Tories" (a label originating in 17th-century Ireland) and know what it means to feel yourself Tory, even if they can't define it. The name "Whig" also has still a real resonance—I sometimes think I may be a Whig myself.

Whether use or abuse of labels for abusive purposes on the hustings or TV serves any honorable purpose must be a matter of opinion. Goldberg quotes a TV exchange on ABC in 1968 in which Gore Vidal goaded William F. Buckley Jr. by calling him a "crypto-Nazi." Buckley replied: "Now listen, you queer, stop calling me a crypto-Nazi or I'll sock you in the goddam face and you'll stay plastered." Buckley instantly regretted this rare departure from civility. But most people will think Vidal, a notably unscrupulous controversialist, had it coming to him, even if the threatened sock had been delivered. Labels like "Nazi" and "fascist," even if qualified by the nervous use of "crypto" or "neo," are what the Irish call "fighting words"—words that, if proved (in a 19th-century Irish court) to have been used, were generally judged by juries to justify a blow. To "fascist" and "Nazi" I would now add the abusive word "racist." Of course such vituperation should not occur at all. But it will, we can be sure, and for those thus tempted, Goldberg has provided an informative catechism. **NR**

Trial by Fire



Richard M. Nixon:
A Life in Full, by Conrad Black
(PublicAffairs, 1,148 pp., $40)

DAVID FRUM

Almost a decade ago, at the zenith of his power and wealth, Conrad Black set out to write a biography of the most powerful and enduring of American presidents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At first glance, it seemed a strange encounter. Black championed legendarily right-wing politics; Roosevelt was . . . well, Roosevelt. And yet, Black fiercely admired and in some ways even identified with the man who once damned people like Black as "economic royalists." Yet the book proved a surprising intellectual and commercial success, widely and rightly applauded as the best single-volume biography of America's longest-serving president.

Since then, fortune has turned on Black. He has been investigated, indicted, and convicted. His companies have been stripped from him and massive penalties imposed. Through the ordeal, he has behaved with courage and dignity, supported by the steadfast love of his wife and his children.

Somehow, Black found time during this tribulation to continue writing. And once

Mr. Frum, a contributing editor of National Review, is the author most recently of *Comeback: Conservatism That Can Win Again.*

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you heard he had begun, his choice of subject was obvious and inevitable: the most embattled and tenacious of American presidents, Richard Nixon.

Black brought to his Roosevelt project a distinct and revisionist point of view. His FDR is much more prescient about Hitler and Stalin and much less radical on economics than the FDR of most history books. With Nixon, Black offers something more unusual than a novel thesis: direct personal knowledge of his subject. Black spent many hours with Nixon in the president's final years. Black was also an intimate friend of Nixon's most important adviser, Henry Kissinger. Some of the most fascinating passages in the book come when Black allows us a glimpse of the weird triangular friendship between the three men. Black writes:

> Kissinger always has been an inexhaustible storehouse of nasty opinions about almost everyone. Only a few extremely powerful or intimate people are exempt from his rather unattractive habit of running down everyone, no matter how congenial he is with the subjects when he sees them.

Many writers who know their subjects so well might be tempted to take shortcuts in the archives. Not Black. He's researched everything and read everything, and delights in pulling up amazing let-Nixon-be-Nixon and let-Henry-be-Henry nuggets.

In 1971, Black reports, Nixon watched an episode of *All in the Family* and was appalled that that "Arch square type" (Archie Bunker) was made to look bad compared with a supposedly homosexual friend of his daughter. "Is this common on television? Destruction of civilization to build homos?" he asked H. R. Haldeman.

And here is Black's account of what happened when it was revealed that Kissinger had been wiretapping some of his closest associates, including his own assistant, Winston Lord: "When all this came to light in 1973, two full years after it had stopped, Nixon manfully took the entire responsibility for it and gave it a national-security cover. . . . Kissinger [, who] had had a great deal more to do with choosing the targeted individuals than Nixon . . . tried a fully gymnastic range of explanations, including that he was doing them a favor by enabling them to demonstrate that they were above suspicion."

Many who write about Nixon have emphasized his weirdness, his resentments, his suspicion. Black acknowledges all those facets of Nixon's character, but he argues that they tend to be overstressed. And where Nixon was genuinely weird, it was in ways shared with many of his predecessors—and probably many of his successors.

> Nixon constantly telephoned people in the middle of the night and demanded that thousands of people be dismissed, and on one occasion ordered Kissinger to have every employee of the State Department submitted to a lie-detector test. When Nixon was serious, he followed up orders and demanded they be executed. . . . [But] Franklin D. Roosevelt once ordered that the United States Marines occupy the *Chicago Tribune* building and that its publisher be charged with high treason. Winston Churchill, two nights before the invasion of Western Europe in Normandy, ordered (at 3 A.M.) that General de Gaulle be removed from Britain . . . and taken to Algeria, "in chains." Needless to say, neither order was carried out.

Black sustains his positive view of Nixon by emphasizing foreign policy over domestic; Nixon may well qualify as the worst economic manager of the 20th century. Black passes gently by Nixon's more cynical and short-sighted decisions to focus his appreciation on the finesse and subtlety of Nixon's foreign policy.

Black argues that the record here is impressive: the extrication from Vietnam on terms that would have enabled the South to survive had Nixon not been crippled by Watergate; the ultra-subtle balancing of China against the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union against China; the realignment of Egypt as an American ally; and so on.

Inevitably, though, it is the ending of the story that will most fascinate readers, who wonder about parallels between Nixon's fall and resurrection and Black's.

Black forthrightly argues that Nixon's proven misdeeds simply do not add up to the "high crimes and misdemeanors" demanded by the Constitution. Black argues that, even all these years later, no evidence has emerged that Nixon ordered the Watergate burglary, or sought to buy anybody's silence, or exceeded the normal rules of politics in his struggle to survive. He also catches Nixon critics in fine acts of hypocrisy—e.g., Joe Califano and Arthur Schlesinger vehemently denying that Johnson or Kennedy would ever have taped the Oval Office, when they could and did.

Yet, at the same time, Black is a close and sensitive student of Nixon's self-destruction. Here he writes of Nixon at a fatal turning point in December 1972: "Nixon had detected danger many times in his presidency, when his opponents thought they had him cornered. . . . He had outsmarted them every time. On [Watergate], he seemed to be blind to its legal implications, and to the horrible indignity that the proximity of any such sleazy behavior inflicted on the great office to which he had just been returned."

And here is Black's verdict on Nixon's final conversations with John Dean, before Dean turned his coat in April 1973: "At the decisive moment of his entire career, Nixon made the wrong as well as the timid decision. . . . If he did not move very soon, it would be impossible to disentangle himself from those who had committed felonies." In the end, writes Black, Nixon "had been sideswiped by an event he was just starting to understand when it was almost too late to address it."

Black is a writer of severe restraint and martini-dry wit. Still, he allows himself one personal editorial comment on the meaning and legacy of Watergate, one that expresses his deep—and well-founded—anger at the way in which he was put to trial on the self-serving testimony of his former business partner:

> The American prosecutorial system encourages a system of suborned or intimidated perjury, or at least spontaneous clarity of recollection, to move upwards in the inculpation of officials in any organization where wrongdoing is alleged. Plea bargains are negotiated by threat and financial strangulation and reduction of penalties, as lower echelons roll over in sequence blaming higher-ups.
>
> It is a questionable system, which [has led] to the installation of the "whistle-blower"—i.e., the squealer—as one of the central figures in American commerce. This process is topped out with the "allocution," as the plea-bargainer denounces himself like the tortured victim of Stalin's show trials. Since the purpose of the plea bargain, for the confessant, is to reduce his sentence, the United States at least avoids the splendid Stalinist flourish of the

accused demanding the swiftest possible imposition of the death penalty on himself.

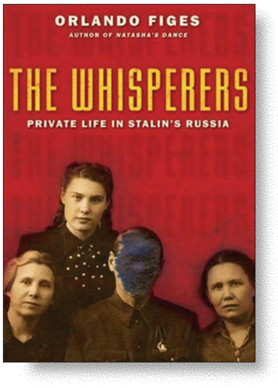
The most moving and beautifully written passages in the book describe the ex-president's departure from Washington, and his illness, isolation, and near-death in the fall of 1974 and spring of 1975. It should have been the end; it proved instead only the latest of Nixon's new beginnings—one of those new beginnings being a new friendship with Black. Nixon wrote books and gave speeches (never accepting a fee, as Black emphasizes). He published articles, advised world leaders, gave interviews.

Nixon's opinions, Black wryly observes, were often wrong: Nixon insisted to the end of the Cold War that the Soviet system would endure. But they consistently hit the perfect sweet spot for bigfoot international commentary, just slightly askew from perfect conventionality, and delighted the media by striking an unmistakable note of criticism of the Reagan administration. For, yes, by the end Nixon had even reached a new entente with the press. Black quotes a bitter private remark by Kissinger: "He is like a prisoner who has fallen in love with his guard."

Has Black sketched a road map to his own future? Many readers will be tempted to think so. Not me. Nixon was a dark, cynical, and in many ways sinister man. "You've got to be a little evil to understand those people out there." He was talking about foreign leaders, but it's hard not to hear the philosophy of a lifetime. The overwhelming impression one takes away of the narrator, by contrast, is that of a man without guile. Black's two favorite adjectives are "distinguished" and "considerable." He is a straightforward admirer of the institutions of American government and the great men of his youth: not only Roosevelt and Nixon, but also Eisenhower and, preeminently, de Gaulle. In all the mass of this book, you will find not a whiff of that touch of evil on which Nixon prided himself.

This is an impressive and profound book by a decent man, written under travail and adversity. One is left wishing that there will be many more like it from Conrad Black, and that a writer who, in his tycoon days, did so much to assist and support the work of others will at last be granted the tranquility to complete his own. **NR**

The Lives of Others



The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia, by Orlando Figes (Metropolitan, 784 pp., $35)

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

It has been the worse part of a century since the bloody birth and savage adolescence of the Soviet state, but the events of those years are still obscure—lost in time, muddled by propaganda, and treated, even now, as the stuff of spin. Those terrible decades remain camouflaged, murky and mysterious, glimpsed mainly in shadow or in tantalizing, elusive outline. They have been best illuminated not in nonfiction accounts, but in novels, short stories, and verse—by Solzhenitsyn's *zek* grateful for his day "without a dark cloud," by the deadpan of Shalamov's spare, unsparing *Kolyma Tales*, by Ahkmatova's torn, desperate, eloquent laments:

This was when the ones who smiled
Were the dead, glad to be at rest.
And like a useless appendage, Leningrad
Swung from its prisons.
And when, senseless from torment,
Regiments of convicts marched,
And the short songs of farewell
Were sung by locomotive whistles.
The stars of death stood above us
And innocent Russia writhed
Under bloody boots
And under the tires of the Black Marias.

That's not, of course, to deny that there

Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

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have been some excellent histories of that era. One of the most notable in recent times was Orlando Figes's *People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924*. Professor Figes, a British historian, is now extending that saga deeper into the nightmare that enveloped the Soviet Union with *The Whisperers*, a massive, sprawling, and unsettling book billed as a description of "private life in Stalin's Russia." In researching it, Figes has made extensive, and extraordinary, use of freshly opened family archives and a large number of personal interviews. As well he might. To understand the founding period of the USSR is tricky enough. To uncover the private lives, and thoughts, of those who lived through it, inhabitants of a society where reticence, conformity, and role-playing could be, even at home, matters of life and death is doubly difficult. Then there is, as Figes writes, this:

> People with traumatic memories tend to block out parts of their own past. Their memory becomes fragmentary, organized by a series of disjointed episodes (such as the arrest of a parent or the moment of eviction from their home) rather than by a linear chronology. When they try to reconstruct the story of their life, particularly when their powers of recall are weakened by old age, such people tend to make up for the gaps in their own memory by drawing on what they have read, or what they have heard from others with experiences similar to theirs.

To accept this logic is to accept that seminal accounts of this period, such as *The Gulag Archipelago* or Eugenia Ginzburg's *Journey into the Whirlwind*, have evolved from, respectively, works of collective history and individual recollection into the imagined, or partly imagined, autobiographies of countless victims of the terror. Figes himself claims that "many Gulag survivors insist that they witnessed scenes described in . . . Ginzburg, Solzhenitsyn, or Shalamov, that they recognize the guards or NKVD interrogators mentioned in these works . . . when documentation clearly shows that this could not be so." Figes never specifies what he means by "many" (the numbers involved are probably, I suspect, less than that adjective implies), but there can be little doubt that the phenomenon is real. Complicating matters further, memories have been distorted not only by trauma and time, but also by wishful thinking:

> People who returned from the labor camps . . . found consolation in the . . . idea that, as Gulag laborers, they too had made a contribution to the Soviet economy. Many of these people later looked back with enormous pride at the factories, dams, and cities they had built. This pride stemmed in part from their continued belief in the Soviet system and its ideology, despite the injustices they had been dealt, and in part, perhaps, from their need to find a larger meaning for their suffering.

Additionally, as Figes reminds us, it's a viewpoint that finds an echo and reinforcement in the widely held opinion that victory in the "Great Patriotic War" can be seen as some sort of justification for the horrors of Stalinist rule.

These ideas are bizarre, but for large numbers of Russians they beat the alternative: facing up to just how much was lost, thrown away, or destroyed in pursuit of a delusion and in the name of a tyrant. This recourse to the comfort of denial and the ease of evasion is of more than academic interest. It helps explain the Putin government's approach to the Communist past. A definitive reckoning with history, that long-overdue Soviet Nuremberg, is too daunting to contemplate, too potentially demoralizing for the nation as a whole, too incriminating for a still-compromised Kremlin establishment. Speaking last year in support of a new manual designed to help the teaching of Russian history in the country's schools, Vladimir Putin conceded that aspects of the former dictatorship were "problematic." Nevertheless, he went on to say that Russia could not allow "other states" to "impose a sense of guilt" upon it. The words he used reveal both unease about the past and, implicitly, a desire to reshape it.

If Figes's analysis casts doubt on the reliability of some accounts of the Stalin years, those he has unearthed for the purposes of this book add fascinating detail to what we know, or think we know, of that epoch. Nevertheless, to view *The Whisperers* as a comprehensive survey of "private life in Stalin's Russia" would be a mistake. For example, there is not a great deal about how it was to experience, and, where possible, endure, the camps and prisons that have come to symbolize the Stalinist order, an aspect of "private life" that Figes appears to believe lies mainly outside the scope of his chosen topic; I'm not so sure.

Meanwhile, at the other end of official approval there is, with one critical exception (the writer Konstantin Simonov, a man who was both too tough and too weak to avoid aligning himself with the system), less than might be expected about those who actively supported the regime or who, in one way or another, flourished under it. As for those "ordinary" Russians who managed, so far as they could, to keep out of the way of history, they feature relatively rarely. Readers looking for more on their lives would do better to turn to the evidence collected in Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism*, and *Stalinism as a Way of Life*,

THE CODE

I took my son from his weary mother.
I gathered him up and paced the living room
In a grey sunrise crossed by early lightning.
After a little while he stopped his crying,
Lifting his head from my shoulder to look around,
Widening and narrowing his eyes as if
The world were stranger than it is to us
Who have puzzled over all its strangenesses.
My face, to him, is a luminous mystery.
He's not old enough to know just what he's seeing
(I wonder if anyone ever is) but already
He seems to know the code of sound and rhyme.
I heard the faraway murmur of spring thunder,
And my son smiled at me for the first time.

—DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN

edited by Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov.

What Figes offers is something less all-embracing. It is, primarily, a look at lives spent on the edge, neither at the heart of darkness nor untouched by it. The stories he recounts could not, by definition, fail to be interesting, but however skillfully he tries to weave them together (and Figes is a highly accomplished storyteller), the final picture is not as coherent as it might be. It's difficult to avoid the suspicion that on this occasion this talented author's reach was greater than his grasp.

As a result, the principal value to be derived from *The Whisperers* is almost incidental to what is supposed to be its main theme. In particular, the book's earlier sections are a remarkable evocation of the sheer scale of the Bolshevik project. This was, in reality, nothing less than an attempt to remake man according to the dictates of what was, for all practical purposes, a millennial cult run by a lethal combination of fanatics, sadists, and opportunists. Nothing could be allowed to stand in the way of this task, and, with the resources of the state behind it, nothing was. In such a climate, the family, the most redoubtable bastion against totalitarianism, was bound to be a key target of the regime. And, as the narratives selected by Figes underline, that is what it became. The conflict, persecution, and occasional moments of stubborn resistance that ensued make up the grim, gripping, and horrific drama around which this book revolves.

But if the Bolsheviks proved effective at sweeping away much of what had preceded them, the ramshackle utopia with which they replaced it was a broken-backed wreck. Another striking aspect of the oral histories contained in this book is how often they share a subtext of astonishing material deprivation and hardship. If the Soviet Union was, as its supporters abroad liked to claim, a "new civilization," it was one with large elements of the premodern about it.

And the physical squalor was, as Figes repeatedly demonstrates, matched by the moral; this, indeed, inspired the book's title. The Stalin years, he writes, left the Russian language with "two words for a whisperer—one for somebody who whispers out of fear for being overheard . . . another for the person who informs or whispers behind people's backs to the authorities."

Mr. Putin, I think, would approve. **NR**

■ ESSAY ■

Date in Pyongyang

JAY NORDLINGER

Last summer, the New York Philharmonic was invited by the government of North Korea to play a concert in Pyongyang. The Philharmonic accepted; the concert will take place on February 26. And we confront a burning question: Were they right to accept?

In a public statement, Zarin Mehta, the orchestra's president and executive director—and brother of the renowned conductor Zubin, incidentally—said, "As you might imagine, we approached [North Korea's invitation] with caution and reservation since, like most Americans—like most people throughout the world—we had little knowledge of this very foreign country." Actually, we have quite a bit of knowledge—from defectors and others.

In brief, North Korea is a perfect totalitarian nightmare: of thought control, concentration camps, famine, torture, and murder. The late Jeane Kirkpatrick described it as a "psychotic state," going on to say that such states are exceedingly rare in history. Norman Podhoretz once described "evil" as "the strongest of all epithets." And the dictatorship of the Kims—first Kim Il Sung and now Kim Jong Il—is evil.

Zarin Mehta has made clear that the New York Philharmonic would not be going to North Korea without the State Department's blessing—which it certainly has. In this sense, the visit can be seen as official. And there has been some guffawing in the press about how the Bush administration is sending an orchestra to a key member of the "Axis of Evil." One might fairly ask, "How can you expect the New York Philharmonic to be more hard-line, or more principled, or more concerned about human rights, than the Bush administration?"

To be sure, there is opposition to the visit within the administration (and to the president's current, relatively conciliatory policy toward North Korea). Dissenters believe that the visit will hand Kim Jong Il a propaganda victory, while doing the Free World—and the North Korean people—no good at all. They believe that the visit will demoralize North Koreans hoping for a better life, and hoping for support from the West. The visit may indicate that America is reconciled to the Kim regime, its legitimacy and permanence.

Years ago, Vladimir Bukovsky, the Soviet dissident, said that Free World governments should ask a question, before making decisions concerning totalitarian regimes: "How will it look to the boys in the camps?"

As of this writing, the Philharmonic's schedule in Pyongyang is not exactly clear. They are expected to meet with local music students and instruct them. And students are to attend a Philharmonic rehearsal. As to who will attend the concert itself: almost surely, governmental and military élite—apparatchiks, or the nomenklatura, as they used to say in the Soviet Union.

One problem with a visit of this sort is that people feel they have to observe the niceties. For example, Philharmonic officials keep calling North Korea "the

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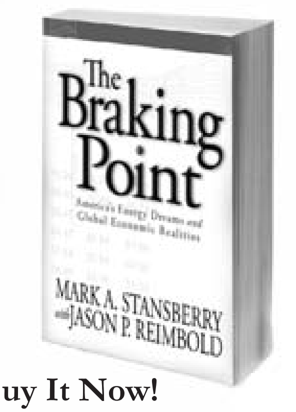
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Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Before the Fall of the Wall, we had to endure Olympics announcers who kept talking about "the German Democratic Republic." Wags would quip that this was three lies in one: Communist Germany was not democratic or republican, and it was not all that German either, given control from Moscow.

In addition, there is the question of Kim Jong Il himself. There is a "ceremonial dinner" on the schedule, and will he attend it? Will he attend the concert? If so, the Philharmonic's conductor, Lorin Maazel, will almost certainly shake his hand. Sixty-five years later, Wilhelm Furtwängler is still under scrutiny for shaking the hand of Goebbels. Some say that, after shaking this hand, Furtwängler wiped his own with a handkerchief, in a gesture full of meaning. Will Maazel have a hanky ready?

At the time it accepted the invitation, the Philharmonic brandished an approving letter from Rep. Tom Lantos—one of the greatest human-rights advocates in Congress. Lantos's opinion carries a lot of weight, certainly with me. And, in developing my own thinking on the matter, I consulted some of the wisest heads I know: in the fields of foreign affairs and human rights. The responses were somewhat mixed. As Harry Wu, the Chinese former political prisoner, says, the issue is "not black and white."

Richard Pipes, the historian, says, "I'm not for [the visit], but I'm not against it." It may not be a bad thing, he says, to show North Koreans—whatever the audience—that "there are values above power politics." He puts himself in the position of a North Korean listening to the orchestra: At last here is something uninfected by ideology.

Paul Hollander, the sociologist, thinks similarly. As long as orchestra members are not required to pay obeisance to Kim, he says, the visit may do some good. It will not be a propaganda coup for the regime. Indeed, "one could make the argument that the very presence of an American orchestra, playing good music—the best of what Western civilization has to offer—in some way diminishes the regime." Also, North Koreans will see Americans of various races playing harmoniously together.

Hollander emphasizes that North Koreans never get to experience decent art, "those poor bastards." He remembers living under the Communists in his native Hungary: "Listening to classical music was such a treat. It was just a relief from the dreariness of the regime and the living conditions."

Arthur Waldron, the East Asia specialist, is for the visit, because he is for bilateral contacts between North Korea and the United States, cutting out the Chinese, who have served as middleman. Furthermore, he has a memory of 1973: In that year, China was visited by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Government propaganda had always said that Americans despised Chinese, and were constantly plotting nuclear war against them. And here was an American orchestra, playing for them, and lifting them up. Waldron adds: "Even John Cage can't kill people with musical instruments." (Cage is a contemporary composer.)

As for Harry Wu, he is for the visit if the Philharmonic can somehow reach ordinary North Koreans, and shine a light on their suffering. But if the orchestra merely shows up to entertain and make nice with a totalitarian regime—no.

And Vladimir Feltsman makes a point that all should bear in mind. He is a Russian-born pianist, long resident in America, who was treated badly by the Soviet government. He reminds us that, in any totalitarian society—North Korea, Cuba, Soviet Russia—everything is political. Nothing is divorced from politics or ideology. There is no "art for art's sake." So, of course, the Kim regime is planning to use the Philharmonic's visit to its advantage.

And NATIONAL REVIEW's John Derbyshire maintains that a dictator always has his own people foremost in mind: "How am I looking to them?" In the case of the Philharmonic's visit, Kim will have an opportunity to say, "Look, I can summon American orchestras to come play for me! The world loves and respects me! And there is nothing you serfs can do about it!"

Feltsman allows that visits by Western musicians to the Soviet Union had some positive effect—if only because these visits cheered Russian musicians. But he is under no illusion that such cultural contacts can bring down a totalitarian dictatorship. And he himself would not accept an invitation from North Korea: "It's like, screw that—what do I need it for?" (This pianist, who grew up in the most stifling conditions, is joyfully blunt.)

John Bolton, the former State Department official and ambassador to the U.N., is adamantly against the visit. He regards it as a pure gift to the regime. It would be one thing, he says, if the Philharmonic's visit were part of some general opening—one in a series of happenings. But it seems to be an isolated event. And that is exactly the position of Jian-li Yang, the Tiananmen Square hero who was released from a Chinese prison last year. He contends that, if the visit is merely an isolated event—without a general infusion of Free World ideas—the North Korean government will use it to show North Koreans that the American people are sympathetic to the government's cause. He has seen this happen in China many times.

Armando Valladares, as you might imagine, is very strong on the subject—he is the Cuban former political prisoner who wrote the great memoir *Against All Hope*. Valladares considers the Philharmonic's visit an "affront" to countless Koreans: those who have been killed, and those who are languishing in the camps. He thinks that the Philharmonic should have rejected the invitation "in solidarity" with an "enslaved people." And he wonders whether the orchestra would have accepted an invitation from the apartheid regime in South Africa.

I was taken by what Anthony Daniels had to say. (This writer has actually been to North Korea, as to so many other places.) Like some of the others, he is neither for the visit nor against it. He has a sense of humility about the decision. But he believes that the onus should be on those who favor the trip to say why it will do some good. Merely to do no harm is not sufficient.

I myself would not accept an invitation from the regime of Kim Jong Il—certainly not to give a concert. I would be queasy about going to any country whose own people are not free to leave—unless I had some necessary official task, or unless I could do some good. For example, why go to Cuba, if not to meet with political prisoners, or oppositionists, and try to help? There are other beaches to sun on. I fear that the Philharmonic's concert will be a boon to Kim. But I hope it backfires on him, which it may. And I wish the New York Philharmonic well. **NR**

■ **FILM** ■

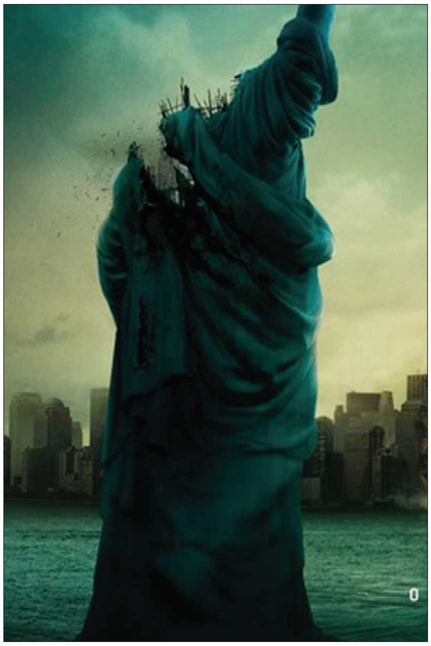
Less than Monstrous

ROSS DOUTHAT

If the name "Cloverfield" meant nothing in particular to you as of the first of this year—if it sounded like a shampoo, perhaps, or a new brand of imitation butter—then you are obviously not an American (okay, a male American) between the ages of 12 and 34 and in possession of a high-speed Internet connection. The latest production from J. J. Abrams, a Hollywood whiz kid with a talent for facile entertainments that give off the illusion of great depth (his next project, appropriately enough, is a revival of the *Star Trek* franchise), *Cloverfield* was sold to its target demographic primarily via a canny viral marketing campaign, in which fake websites containing clues to the movie's plot were layered atop deliberately cryptic trailers, and the premise of the film was held as a closely guarded secret. What was allowed to slip out suggested *The Blair Witch Project* crossbred with *Godzilla*: still frames of dust-drowned streets and sinking oil tankers, a one-sheet showing a headless Lady Liberty standing guard over a burning New York with the tagline "Something Has Found Us," and snippets of handheld video in which that mysterious Something interrupts hip young things celebrating a raucous Manhattan going-away party.

Sure enough, *The Blair Godzilla Project* is exactly what the film turns out to be. *Cloverfield*'s 84 vertiginous minutes purport to be the property of the U.S. military, having been "recovered from incident site US-447 (formerly known as Central Park)." The hip young things' party—held in honor of Rob (Michael Stahl-David), a scruffily handsome twentysomething on his way off to a plum new job in Japan—is the reason for the tape's existence: Rob's best friend, Hud (T. J. Miller), a cheery doofus who spends most of the movie as a disembodied voice behind the camera, has been assigned to record going-away testimonials, and as he circles the party we're introduced to Rob's brother Jason (Mike Vogel), Jason's girlfriend, Lily (Jessica Lucas), Hud's crush Marlena (Lizzy Caplan), and the darkly gorgeous Beth (Odette Yustman), who used to be Rob's best friend until they slept together and things got complicated. Indeed, Hud is taping over a video of their last happy day together—a sun-drenched trip to Coney Island, which survives in interstitial snatches, an idyllic counterpoint to the larger horror.

That horror shows up about 20 minutes in, shortly after Beth appears at the party with another guy on her arm, feuds with Rob, and then bolts, her date in tow. With no warning, the ground rumbles, flames spurt from the financial district, the Statue of Liberty's head comes bouncing uptown, and the Woolworth Building gets leveled. "Is it the terrorists?" someone shouts, but the audience knows better, having caught a glimpse, through our camcorder's-eye view, of something large and scaly slouching through the downtown canyons.



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

No doubt conditioned by the real-estate market, all the pretty people make a dash for Brooklyn, which of course turns out to be a big mistake (whatever the Something is likes the water just as well as the land). Thrown back into Manhattan with his friends, Rob gets a message from Beth, who's trapped under the rubble in her Columbus Circle apartment, and decides to cross the monster-ravaged city to find her; after some understandable caviling, his pals—including the camera-toting Hud, whose unflagging commitment to documenting the disaster is impressive, if just *slightly* implausible—tag along.

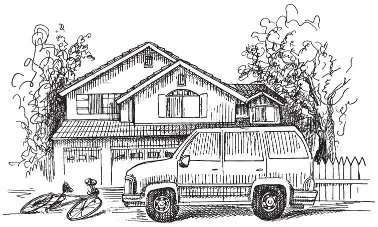
Obviously, fodder for *Cahiers du Cinéma* this movie isn't. But as disaster-film concepts go, a victim's-eye view of a Godzilla-style attack offers considerable promise. Until its disastrous final act, Steven Spielberg's recent *War of the Worlds* used a similar approach to documenting an alien invasion (minus the "found footage" gimmick) to excellent effect, and the *Cloverfield* twist—forcing the world's most entitled youthful cosmopolitans to confront their own mortality—promises similar "more than just a monster movie" resonances.

Or it would, if the youthful cosmopolites in question weren't the blandest, most vacuous group of pretty faces assembled for an urban slaughter since *Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan*. I would describe Rob and Beth and Marlena and all the rest of them as one-dimensional, but even a single dimension can suffice as character development in the context of a fast-moving thriller. (The hit TV series *Lost*, easily the best thing Abrams has had a hand in, generates enormous interest in its cast of castaways even though most of them are more archetypes than full-fledged human beings.) *Cloverfield*'s characters, alas, are zero-dimensional: They're no more capable of summoning up real individuality, meaningful dialogue, or profound emotion when their friends are dying next to them than when those same friends are downing microbrews.

Their unbearable lightness, in turn, pushes the audience's attention toward the places where *Cloverfield*'s gimmicky premise starts to grate. The absurdity of Hud's dogged videotaping, which continues even while he's scrambling over the roof of an off-kilter skyscraper or looking up into the looming, toothy maw of the dreadful Something, eventually inspires not just disbelief but giggles. Worse, the banality of the human drama makes the movie's blatant debt to 9/11 seem far tackier than it otherwise would. There's no problem with a monster movie drawing on real-life fears and horrors and imagery; the best ones always have. But if you're going to rip off the worst day in recent American memory for a film in which a scaly creature the size of the Chrysler Building makes a snack out of screaming adultescents, you have a moral obligation to make a better, deeper, richer monster movie than this. **NR**

■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Gripe Homeostasis



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

NOT my favorite time of year. Taxes, for one thing. As a freelancer, working from check to check, the nearest I get to the sly painlessness of the salaryman's withholding tax is quarterly "estimated" payments. Figure out how much income you will have next year. (Ha!) Compute federal tax payable. Divide into four equal parts. Write checks: April, June, September, January. Repeat for state tax, unless you are wise enough (I'm not) to live in one of the nine states that don't tax ordinary income. That four-month gap from September to January is a nice touch. I suppose the authorities feel that to have a due date ten days before Christmas would cast too much of a pall over our holiday spirits. So instead they set the date at 21 days *after* Christmas, just as all the credit-card bills are coming due. I seethe, I fume, I groan.

Then, health insurance. Once again, the strong preference of the authorities that we all be corralled into salaried employment so that they can more easily watch us, record us, and harvest our labor, shines through the arrangements. If you yoke yourself to a corporate employer, some modest portion of your paycheck will be gently, unobtrusively snipped away to cover you and your family. Live by your wits, however, and monstrous demands from a health insurer thump into your mailbox every month. Worse, that phrase about "escalating costs of health care" that newspapers have set up permanently in type becomes all too real to you every January, as the annual rate hike takes hold. My monthly payment went from $857 to $973 this year, an "escalation" of 14 percent—quite modest, actually, in comparison with previous years. This, as credit cards and estimated taxes fill the mind. I groan, I seethe, I fume.

It is all wrong, all wrong. Income tax is, as Murray Rothbard said, "undoubtedly the most totalitarian of all taxes." Health insurance is the Antarctica of the consumer economy: vast, frigid, and well-nigh empty of humanity. My own insurer seems to reject all claims on principle, waiting to see whether we care enough about the item to spend three hours on the phone justifying it to rule-driven bureaucrats in distant call centers. Our most recent claim (child stung by wasp, allergic reaction, emergency-room visit, allergist called in) was turned down because the allergist's filing had not included a "provider license number." A letter informing me of this very nearly arrived in the same post as notice of the rate hike. After finally, on my fourth attempt, getting all the way through their labyrinthine call menu, I confronted the call-center penguin: "How am *I* supposed to know the doctor's darn license number? Why are you telling *me* this? Why don't you just *call the guy and ask him?*" Sorry, they don't do that. This is the service I get for a thousand bucks a month. I fume, I groan, I seethe.

Plainly, reforms are needed! Politicians, in this election season, make appropriate promises. Mrs. Clinton will shift more of the tax burden to the wealthy. John McCain will abolish the Alternative Minimum Tax. Mitt Romney will let me save interest and dividends tax free. John Edwards will simplify the tax code down to "five-minute filing." Mike Huckabee will replace the income tax with a national sales tax. Fred Thompson will make the system "simpler and fairer." Ron Paul will channel Murray Rothbard. And yes, they all have health-care plans, too. Clearly the future will be better than the present.

The past was also better than the present. I don't recall anyone griping about health care 30 years ago, when I first came to these shores. People griped about taxes, of course, but the system was a good deal simpler, though admittedly with a top rate of 70 percent. There were then still old people around who could remember there being no income tax at all.

It would seem, therefore, that the present moment is some nadir of misfortune for the struggling middle-class citizen. Confirmation comes from the TV evening news: The Speaker of the House, meeting with the chairman of the Fed, sobs that "Americans are having trouble meeting everyday expenses." Later I catch Lou Dobbs's show on CNN. Lou is railing against "corporate elites," and their cruel insensitivity to that same beleaguered middle class. (At least, I *think* that's what he's doing. It's always a challenge to figure out what Lou is actually saying through the four different speech impediments he seems to be afflicted with simultaneously. "Whut-ah in the *wordled* uh-air they ngr-thinkling uh-hov? . . .")

And yet . . . the streets of this middle-class suburb are clogged with late-model SUVs. The local mall is thronged with shoppers. Neighbors are off on ski trips. Mrs. Straggler is contemplating cosmetic surgery. The kids now both have cellphones. Struggling? Beleaguered? Well . . .

There is a phenomenon, found in many complex systems, called *homeostasis*. This is the seeking of some familiar equilibrium following a change of circumstances. Automobile drivers go at certain average speeds, suffer a certain rate of accidents. Seat-belt laws are introduced. Now feeling safer, drivers go faster, generating a higher accident rate, though at no more harm to themselves. This is "risk homeostasis."

My January fumings are most likely a case of gripe homeostasis. I probably griped just as much in my salaryman days, but about different things. The middle classes have likely always felt beleaguered, but by different foes. Outside true catastrophes like the Great Depression, the general level of human contentment has, I suspect, varied very little since the founding of the Republic.

Actually, life is pretty darn good in 2008, and society wonderfully well ordered. My kids may get wasp stings, but they won't be getting polio. These checks I am writing will be honored even if the bank goes bust. My sump pump just gave up the ghost, but at least the Creek won't be burning my house. The presidential candidates are offering us "change"? Perhaps we'd be smarter to seek someone who promises to leave things the heck alone.

How small, of all that human
    hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can
    cause or cure!

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

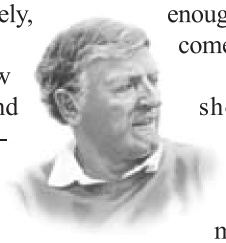
Inside Obama

NEW YORK, JANUARY 11

At 3:00 a.m. the night after Iowa, a tough-minded friend e-mailed me (he didn't want to wake me at 3, merely to record what was going through his mind after the tumultuous victory). "I must say," he wrote, "I liked Barack a lot less after his flagrantly ranty speech about how the real evil in America is a) the drug companies and b) the oil companies. That is, the industries that keep us a) alive and b) warm."

There is a lot of what we used to write off as "reductionism" in that sentence. But there is also that wholesome impulse to search for a more comprehensive reading of Barack Obama.

Everybody knows Obama has gone further than merely to denounce oil and drug profits. What is it, concretely, that he wants?



One needs to disqualify a few of the candidate's postures, and this applies also to other candidates, of both parties. Nobody, at this stage, is going to favor aggressive military action. The politicians therefore make it clear that such appropriations as they support for the military are for beefing up our self-defense. Kindly do not muddy this proposition by interjecting that sometimes, self-defense is best done by preemptive military initiatives.

So Obama will struggle for peace and a resilient military. On this point, he will disagree only retroactively in the matter of Iraq. So, in understanding Obama, one reaches for concrete policy differences, and here is one that attracts attention: "I simply believe that those of us who have benefited most from this new economy can best afford to shoulder the obligations of ensuring that every American child has a chance for that same success."

Such words bring cheers, because what we are doing is applauding the singular successes of the speaker. But the cavil here is that they must be understood as singular. There is every reason in the world to declare that one wishes for the entire next generation that they come in speaking with the lucidity of Abraham Lincoln and showing the enterprise of Bill Gates. What is wrong is to stimulate the illusion that such things are possible.

One reason for the spectacular success of Obama is the accumulation of burdens he faced and overcame. His father was black, the family destitute; early life was a struggle in Hawaii and Indonesia.

What does it take to transform that into acceptance by Columbia University? Okay, it seems that affirmative action leaned a heavy shoulder on the admissions-office door. But wait! Obama was then accepted by Harvard Law School and—finally—he was elected president of the *Harvard Law Review*. There is no reason to suppose that the admissions people, or his colleagues on the *Review*, said, Whoa! Here's a guy homely enough personally, and cosmopolitan enough in background, he might become a presidential candidate!

The successes thundered in: a show-stopping oration to the Democratic National Convention in 2004, and then election to the U.S. Senate, and steady movement (excepting in New Hampshire) toward his eminence today, which is difficult to match.

But to suggest to his listeners that any active intervention by the government would increase the "chance for that same success" for "every American child" is mischievous. To imply that such careers are open to most people, let alone every American child, is to foster frustration, and to stimulate disillusion. In 1948, when Sen. Robert Taft announced that he was seeking the GOP presidential nomination, a reporter asked his wife, "Mrs. Taft, do you consider your husband a common man?"

She turned on him and said: "My husband was first in his class at Yale College. Then he went to Harvard Law School, where he graduated first in his class."

Robert Taft was not to be likened to the common man, and neither is Barack Obama, who can do a great deal urging the younger generation to emulate what he, Obama, did in working to be educated, and mastering the law, and of course expressing gratitude to free American institutions that recognize and encourage advancement. But it is not unimportant to remind the voters of that generation that there is nothing, nothing that the state can do to replicate Obama's success for a million others.

See Who Gave

NEW YORK, JANUARY 8

If you are in search of details on financial traffic moving about, paying for all the political ads we come across, plus high living for the traffic cops, go to your computer and try searching for "Federal Election Commission" on the Internet.

Pause. If you do not have a computer or ready access to one, just accustom yourself to a widening world of privation, as if, every day, one fewer light bulb in your universe came on.

A subheading in the FCC's listing takes you to "Presidential Campaign Finance Map." Here we get a reading on campaign-finance traffic as of last fall. All this year's presidential candidates taken together had received $372 million from individuals. The size of the donations bears thought. The two most substantial groups of givers are those who gave $200 or less, and those who gave $1,000 or more. From the modest givers, $76 million; from the high rollers, $260 million; with an even $100 million coming from all the categories in between.

From which parts of the country did the money flow? There are no great surprises. One finds the biggest balloon in California, one nearly as big in New York State, and somewhat smaller but still sizable ones in Greater Washington, D.C., Texas, Florida, and Illinois.

And now for the recipients.

Democrats had taken in $241 million. Republicans, $175 million. These are close enough to warrant rapid reading: A dollar for the party that sponsors the things I've been getting, a dollar and 37 cents for the party that promises me more than I am now getting. Albert Jay Nock put it crassly 75 years ago when he said that politics is a means of accumulating money without manual labor. Of course, there are a hundred other uses of government than merely to act as the agent for redistribution, but for such purposes as we have in mind, Nock's adage is useful.

All right then, who are the recipients? The party out of power quite reasonably catches the eye of the petitioner: The party from which better conditions, in his view, will come than have come from the party in power. As noted, $175 million for the maintenance team, $241 million for the aspirant replacement team.

And the eye comes, finally, to individuals being courted by the donors, stimulating thought as to why the numbers went as they did. Number 1 was Mrs. Clinton, with $89 million. Much of the money she received reflects the donors' attraction to a favorite. In some contests, only the winner matters; this is not quite the case in a presidential race, because the runner-up may gain influence from a strong showing. And there can always be the candidate who is campaigning on a novel doctrine that catches the favorable notice of the backers. Still, front-runner status undeniably brings in cash.

Surprisingly close to Mrs. Clinton's $89 million was Barack Obama's $79 million. This presaged the revolution that was. Next in line were three Republicans: Romney with $62 million, Giuliani with $47 million, and McCain with $31 million. Then came Edwards at $30 million. A caution: These figures do not disclose self-financing. Thanks to the Buckley–Valeo bill—cosponsored 30-some years ago by the Sainted Junior Senator from New York, on the grounds that the then-new campaign-financing law violated freedom of speech—no limits are permissible on what John Edwards can give to Edwards-for-President. Then there are a few eclectic distributions. Who on earth gave $13 million to Senator Dodd, and why?

So the net of the distribution of political giving is, up to a point, reassuring. We learn that the huge sum of $76 million can come in from small donors. The big contributors—corporations, labor unions, trade associations—continue dominant, but not decisive.

And the entire exercise can be carried away by one truly explosive political tornado—as we saw in Iowa.

Primary Confusions

NEW YORK, JANUARY 15

SEBASTIAN MALLABY, a journalist for the *Washington Post*, writes to formulate, or rather reformulate, the complaint we are entitled to make on the matter of our primary practices. Mallaby reminds us that if three people are running for office, we can't know which of the three is the true favorite of the voters. You can't merely subtract the vote for the man who came in third and apportion it to scale as between no. 1 and no. 2, because if no. 3 had not been in the race, more of his voters might have gone for no. 2 than for no. 1. And the confusion deepens if there are more than three candidates. In Iowa, the Democrats had eight, the Republicans seven.

Most European countries don't have this problem because there is no line on the ballot for "prime minister." It is left to the majority political party to decide who shall be its leader, and except in his own district he does not face local popularity contests. The operating thesis is that unless the party puts forward a leader who is attractive to the electorate as a whole, the candidate will wear down the party's popularity, and a contending party will step in.

We have the additional problem of the advantage given to candidates who are effective in the early contests. To show up well in Iowa means much more than to win Iowa delegates. It propels the victor to a strategic eminence which can hugely affect subsequent votes. There are candidates who kill themselves to raise five or ten million dollars to advertise their attractions to the next set of primary voters a week hence. That itself is a distracting interference in the attempt to divine the popular will.

Efforts have been made to limit the sums that can be spent in election contests. These efforts have failed, and probably should fail, inasmuch as the regulation of money spent on an election is not automatically a means of reducing extraneous factors in political appeal. The election process is a market exercise. The voter is given the choice of Clinton, Obama, or Edwards, and it is left exclusively to him what weight he wishes to attach to Clinton's experience, Obama's exotic racial background, or Edwards's good looks.

But the critics are on firm ground if they ask simply, as Mallaby does, that a primary winner not be judged preeminent if he (read he/she) is competing in a race in which there are more than two candidates. Which raises concrete questions about the current scene.

Would Clinton have prevailed in New Hampshire if Obama had been her only opponent? Do not go off self-satisfied with the assumption that the problem would be solved by contriving a means of eliminating the factor of Edwards et al. That could be done by reforms mandating a runoff between the two top vote-getters, as they do in France. But it would leave unanswered the question: Are the voters in a local primary being deprived of representation consistent with their potential strength in a national contest?

One approach would grant points to primary candidates, to be added up at the end of the line. So that such as Mr. Edwards don't just get eliminated, they store up points which they can invoke at the final clearinghouse of the national convention.

Well, most of these projected reforms simply aren't going to happen unless a demonstrable distortion should wrench from favor existing procedures. But our system has means of coping with, if not eliminating, crippling paradoxes. It was not so long ago, in American history, that the next candidate of the party in power was simply the person ordained by the incumbent. It was in part a recognition of the awful likelihood that Henry Wallace would be the Democratic candidate succeeding FDR that brought on the switch to Harry Truman as vice president in 1944.

We do not face such contingencies in 2008. What we do face is several more months of the kind of confusion that can frustrate the modern American voter.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

"Let's land in Arkansas—you can get away with anything *there."*

happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Children of the Gap

ROGER L. SIMON, the screenwriter and executive honcho of Pajamas Media, had what he called "one of those rare Zen moments of simplicity" while watching some or other presidential debate the other day. "It all comes down," he wrote, "to a simple question: 'Who would you like to be in the White House if Pakistan fell to al-Qaeda and the Islamists gained control of its nuclear arsenal?' Answer that question and you will know your candidate."

Well, maybe. But it seems to me a big chunk of the electorate is asking itself another simple question: Who would you like to be in the White House to make all the fellows who go on about al-Qaeda, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, the whole 24/7 orange-alert War on Terror rigmarole go away?

Hillary, Obama, and Edwards couldn't be less interested in Pakistani nukes. Nor are half the GOP candidates—the Ron Paul and Huckabee wings of the party. And even the rest of the Republicans—the so-called national-security candidates—can seem a bit pro forma about the whole business. This doesn't feel like a who-do-you-want-in-the-Oval-Office-when-there's-a-mushroom-cloud-over-Cleveland election cycle. It will soon be seven years since 9/11, five years since the Iraq liberation. There are no more "security moms" or "9/11 Democrats." Your 2001 "warblogger" is today likely denouncing Halliburton for being in cahoots with Hillary. Or at least that seems to be the cut of Andrew Sullivan's jib when he argues that the point of the surge was to provide a pretext for U.S. troops to stay in Iraq for the next hundred years: "The key to this strategy is the Clinton Restoration. If the Bush family can get the other dynasty to buy into the occupation, the empire expands—as the republic hollows out from within. With $1 trillion gone, this Mesopotamian province will continue to suck $3 billion a week from what's left of the treasury. . . . If you think the Clintons will withdraw, you probably think they've had nothing to do with the slime covering Obama right now. Good times."

Gotcha. Bill and Hill are now part of the vast right-wing conspiracy. Perhaps they always were. Perhaps it goes back to a deal Bush's grandfather signed—in between those Nazi war-profiteering contracts—with Clinton's biological father, Bill Blythe, before the traveling salesman mysteriously drowned in that New Deal drainage ditch, an oddly symbolic act prefiguring Bill's own attempt to drown Barack Obama in neo-Bush-Clintoburton slime.

Eventually Godzilla shows up and starts tossing automobiles down Fifth Avenue . . .

Anyway, this isn't a war election, unless by "war" you mean any racket the Bushitler cabal cooks up as a pretext to keep the orange-alert national-security state going indefinitely. John Podhoretz declared the day of Benazir Bhutto's murder "the end of the primary's holiday from history" and the return of "foreign policy, the war on terror, and the threat of Islamofascism back into the center of the 2008 campaign." But Bhutto's death already seems a long time ago, and, if the 2008 campaign did ever end its holiday from history, it resumed it within hours.

I broadly agree with Roger L. Simon on the importance of Pakistan. And if al-Qaeda seized power and nuked Des Moines it would certainly catch the eye even of the most disengaged citizen. Reuters had a story the other day about the arrest of the group behind a thwarted attack on the Sargodha Air Force Base in central Punjab, where nuclear weapons are said to be stored; en passant, it revealed that the cell was storing its explosives next to the local madrassa and was led by an ex–Pakistani army major. No big deal, nothing anyone paid any attention to, just a routine day for a key U.S. "ally." That's how it seems likely to go: more cells led by more senior officers, more schools storing more explosives, more graduates of that school system exported around the world. Things in Pakistan will trend as they usually do—downhill—but incrementally enough that they'll impinge barely at all, until we discover that the tipping point was a year ago and we were too busy discussing prescription drugs for seniors.

In that sense, the real "holiday from history" is what the Canadian writer George Jonas calls "the 60-year gap": the period between the British rout of the Turks and the march of a Western army into the heart of the Arab world in 1918, and the fall of the shah to an "Islamic republic" six decades later. Between those dates, the long struggle between Islam and "Christendom" appeared to be over, and everything from the "Palestinian peace process" to the House of Saud was reframed in the more or less conventional secular-nationalist terms of the era. Everyone who runs Western democracy today was born in that 60-year gap, and many are still wedded to its illusions. Islam's radicalization and remarkable expansion through Africa, Asia, and Europe is part of an old, long, slow struggle.

But incremental forces are the hardest for democracies to grapple with. It's like the beginning of that *Godzilla* remake, with all the bewildered experts standing around in the crater unable to figure out what it is, and only when the camera pulls way back up into the sky do we see what they can't—that it's a giant footprint. Of course, eventually Godzilla shows up and starts tossing automobiles down Fifth Avenue and through the Flatiron Building. And maybe that'll happen with the Pakistani Islamists, too. Or maybe it'll just stay nice and low-key and incremental and remorseless, while we go on talking about socialized health care for another election cycle or two. **NR**

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He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at $42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.

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